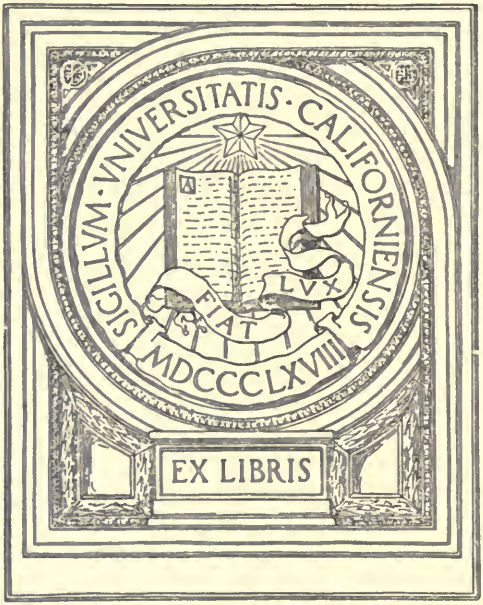
The MIDGE.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



THE MIDGE

BY

H. C. BUNNER,

AUTHOR OF "AIRS FROM ARCADY AND ELSEWHERE."

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1887

COPYRIGHT, 1886, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

PS
1202
M58

TO

A. L. B.

347709

Princeton JUN 1 '48 English Dept.

THE MIDGE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was quiet in the Brasserie Pigault. It was a snowy night, for one thing, the air full of a damp, heavy fall of broad white flakes. And then there had been a bad fire down in Grand Street, and the frivolous and pleasure-seeking portion of the quarter's population had gone down to see the wounded people taken out of the ruins.

So business was dull at the Brasserie Pigault. Undeservedly dull, for the only stains on the dim walls were the stains of time: the table-tops shone like century-polished mahogany, the lusty, friendly fire glowed through the red eyes of the great stove, the sand on the floor was crystal-bright, and bright were Madame Pigault's black eyes, as she sat knitting behind the desk, and looked toward the window, where a fantail of

gas-jets lit up alluringly the legend which, when you once got inside, read:

It was only a beer-saloon, of course; but there was a comfort and cleanliness about it that were almost homelike. And, just for this dull hour, the room was filled with the charm of that sacred yet sociable quiet which the male animal of our species loves to establish in whatever serves him for club-room.

There were little noises, but they were of a gentle sort. From time to time there was the joggle of falling coal in the big stove; and then Louis, the waiter, set it right with a subdued rattling. Sometimes a gas-jet flared and wheezed and whistled until madame's knitting-needles clicked on the counter, and Louis flew across the room just as the vicious spurt of flame made up its mind to subside. More often than this, a glass clinked against the shining brass faucet of the

keg, and there was a "whish!" of beer, quickly drowned in its own bubbling overflow. And almost regularly every ten minutes, the crash of shuffling dominos came from where Mr. Martin and M. Ovide Marié, the curly-haired music-teacher from Amity Street, were playing.

Just across the room from Mr. Martin and M. Marié, at the table under the corresponding gas-light, sat the Doctor. His overcoat, with its military-looking cape, was thrown back over his shoulders, his elbows were planted on the table, and his head was propped up between the closed fists. A good American face it was, too, that looked at you over those lean, sinewy, nervous American knuckles. A hatchet-face, if you will, but a pleasant face for all that—strong and fine, with the lines of good stock in it, with force in the clear gray eye and humor in the curl of the mouth. A gentle face—babies pawed the air to get at it as soon as they saw it—and yet, looking at it, you could quite understand that this was the same Captain Peters who, in 1863, carried despatches straight through Quantrell's lines to that interesting arm of the U. S. forces which at that time was fighting fire with fire, up and down Missouri.

Nobody ever called him Captain nowadays, though. Between Broadway and the North River, from Washington Square nearly to Canal Street, old residents hailed him as "Doctor," and with

the sensitive modesty of the genuine soldier, he accepted the civilian title, and said nothing about his captaincy or his record. Besides, it was Fate, he thought, that he should be a doctor after some fashion. All the Evert Peterses for five generations back (and there the count stopped) had been doctors. This last Evert Peters had had no liking for a physician's life; but no choice had been given him. When he was old enough to go to medical college, to medical college he went, and there he stayed until six weeks before final examination, when his father died. Then he gave his books and kit to his chum, went back to Oneida, buried his father, took himself to Troy, and set to work studying civil engineering. Then the war broke out, and he found what little he knew of medicine and civil-engineering coming handy in ways he never dreamed of. When he came home from the war, he sought out the quiet region where what is now the French quarter of New York merges into Greenwich Village, and there settled himself for a week or two, to look about him. And then Ovide Bocage, working in the planing-mill in Prince street, got his hand into the machinery, and would have lost three fingers if it had not been for the timely surgery of the young man just home from the war. And so the young man was gratefully called "the Doctor." The "week or two" had become fourteen years,

the pale brown hair of the "young man" had grown paler yet with streaks of gray, the great city had grown up and left their quarter far down town, but still the people thereabout called Evert Peters "the Doctor," and he occupied a well-established yet ill-defined place in the community, something between the physician and the priest, a sort of amateur ally and adjunct of two professions, accepted by both and recognized by neither; but very dearly loved by all with whom he had to do.

He knew what was wanted, sitting cozily that night in the Brasserie Pigault, when he heard Piero open the door, put his head in, and shout:

"Ohé, m'sieu' le docteur!"

Piero had the singsong of the sea in his cheery hail. He was a Franco-Italian, and the first voyage he ever made was his voyage to this country, in 1867, on the bark *Mariana III.* As the rest of the *Mariana's* burden consisted of Cette wines and Portuguese sailors, it must have been Piero's personal virtue that saved her from going down in an unregrettable shipwreck. Since his arrival, Piero had never left the French quarter; but, with the aid of a pair of rings in his ears and a roll in his walk, he contrived to give a maritime flavor to his life; and when he entered a room, as far as he possibly could he made you feel that he was just opening the door

of your cabin to smile on you with his storm-beaten brown face and report all snug aloft.

"What's the matter, Piero?" inquired the Doctor, with a harmless scowl bringing his bushy gray eyebrows closer together.

"Ooman goin' die," Piero answered, grinning with all his white teeth: "goin' die bad, down 'Ouston Strit."

"Why don't you go for Dr. Milhaud? It's his business, you marine chissy-cat," said the Doctor, trying to be irritable. "How often have I got to tell you that I won't interfere with a regular physician unless it's a case of necessity?"

"Yes," grinned Piero, catching at the last word: "Necess'tairee, vair necess'tairee. She goin' die, ev-vair-ee time, shu'."

The Doctor rose from his table with a little sigh of discomfort and a glance at his half-drunk glass of beer, and then he resolutely buttoned his coat.

"Where's Dr. Milhaud? Down at the fire?"

"Yes, sair. Down to ze fi-er. Two men burn', t'ree kill', le petit Coquerel knock' down by engine; guess lose leg," Piero explained, with great cheerfulness. "Doct' Milhaud got 'em boce, dem fell's ouat bin burn'—zey don't ouant go to no hospital."

"More fools they," observed the Doctor, leading the way to the door, touching his hat as he

passed Mme. Pigault. Piero cast a longing, suggestive eye at the bar, and followed him out where the silent flakes sifted down on them out of the moist blackness above.

"Who is it now, Piero?" inquired the Doctor, as he strode on, tall and straight, towering above Piero, who rolled along as though he had the whole Spanish Main surging in his legs.

"Zat Poland lady, wiz ze li'l' gal. Her hosban' he die two mont' ago."

"Why, Piero,"—the Doctor knit his brows again,—"that woman's in the last stages of consumption, sure enough. Milhaud told me about her. You don't want *me* to go there; you want the priest."

"No, she don' ouant no prist," and Piero shook his head vigorously: "she sen' fo' *you*."

"What's her religion?"

"Ma foi, I guess she don' got no God nor nossin'. I say to her: 'I get you prist.'—She say: 'You get me prist; prist bring my hosban' back, eh?' I say: 'No; if you got hosban', ouat you ouant of prist? if you no got you' hosban' no mo', zen you ouant prist. Zat ouat prist good fo'—talk good ouen you ain' got ouat you ouant."

The Doctor laughed softly.

"Zen M'sieu' Goubaud—she bo'd wiz M'sieu' Goubaud, he biggin talkin', an' he say: 'You *ex*-cuse me, madame; you die somevair else, I

don' care ouaire you go; you die he', in my 'ouse, you got go heaven. Eef you no have prist, you have prodestan'; if you no have prodestan', you have Doct' Pittair.' Zen she say: 'I take Doct' Pittair,' an' M'sieu' Goubaud, he sen' me fo' you."

It was an old story for the Doctor. Many was the poor outcast, afraid to face priest or clergyman, who had consented to open his sin-laden heart to the good-natured stranger who was nothing more than a sympathetic fellow-sinner. This was a sort of duty for which the Doctor considered himself utterly unfit; but which chance forced upon him. He went through it all with a grimly humorous hope that some good, in some unseen direction, might come of it all. For himself, he could find, as he said, no sense in it. "Far as *I* can see," he remarked once, "I'm getting my system saturated with the smell of cabbage, and helping a lot of cussed scoundrels to die easy, when it would be a sight healthier for their eternal souls to take hold and wrastle with their iniquity, and die with some sort of understanding of what their prospects are. I'm afraid some of those fellows that I've sent off so slick and pleasant wouldn't thank me for it now."

In Houston Street, the dampness and heaviness, and the lifeless fall of the snowflakes, were enough to depress the spirits of even the chil-

dren, who had long ceased to skylark about the areas and basements and up and down the sharp-pitched steps. Beer saloons and groceries kept the street awake with patches of light; but the weight of the dull, damp weather was over everything.

M. Goubaud was a dealer in feathers, and the smell of his stock penetrated to the uttermost corner of the rickety building in which he kept shop and stored lodgers. But it was lost among a dozen other smells in the close back room to which Piero led the Doctor. Few sick-rooms are sweet, but in this one there was an element of unusual offensiveness in the musky cheap perfume which rose from an open trunk in one corner where some bits of gaudy silk and satin showed bright and sharp amid the dirt and grime around them.

"Theatrical, of course," said the Doctor to himself. He sat down by the bed while Piero introduced him:

"Doct' Pittair!" announced the sea-farer, his head half-way in the door: "All same prist!" and he vanished.

Emaciated and death-stricken, it was beautiful still, the face that lay pale against the soiled blue ticking of the pillow. Young, too, the Doctor noticed; scant thirty. A lovely creature she must have been, ten years before, when there was color in those tea-rose cheeks, rosy fire in the

pale, shapely lips, life in the tangled mass of dark hair damp with death. Her great black eyes opened as he looked at her, and in the first flash it seemed as though he saw her as she must have been. Then they closed again wearily; they had taken no notice of his presence.

Madame Goubaud, sallow, lean and unsympathetic, bent her hard mechanic face over the sick woman, and raspingly appealed to her to wake up and say her last words to the good doctor.

The thin face moved on the pillow in a pettish way, and the eyes remained obstinately closed.

"*Maman!*"

This came from a child, a girl, a thin, small reproduction of the dying woman; a little dark-haired, dark-eyed thing, who had slipped up in front of the visitor, and stood, frowning anxiously as she looked at the invalid. Her meagre, nervous hands grasped a medicine-bottle and a spoon.

"*Maman!*" she said again with a vehement severity of tone, while her pale lips trembled: "Maman! parle donc! ce n'est pas gentil, ça—tu le sais bien!" She turned to the Doctor in explanation and dropped into an English of her own. The voice was childish; but the manner, the management of emphasis and inflection, were absurdly mature.

"It is with a sick as with a crazy, monsieur. You must treat them as the children. It is no use to reason with them. Maman! tu m'écoutes?"

The mother opened her great eyes again, and stared at the Doctor, at first vacantly, then with a fretful summoning of intelligence.

"C'est M. Peters," said the child, encouragingly. Her English words she pronounced correctly, with perhaps the least faintly perceptible trace of a French accent. But the French seemed to slip more easily to her tongue.

The mother was opening and closing her feverish lips, as though to indicate that her mouth was dry and choking. The Doctor noted in the act that little touch of exaggeration and appeal which marks the undisciplined invalid. The child put a spoonful of water between her mother's lips and carefully tilted it, standing patiently, with knit brows and watchful eyes, until it was all drunk.

"You spik Franch?" inquired the woman, hoarsely. The Doctor bowed. His French had never recovered from the accent he had painfully learned at school; but he had been long enough in the French quarter to accustom his ear to a language that he heard more frequently than his own; and he could generally follow what was said to him, were it said in anything short of a Basque patois. It was a rapid talker who could force him to help himself out with an occasional "*pah* si vite!" or "*kesker*-c'est-que-ça."

But he had a hard task this time. The woman's story was brief, and her speech was slow, but so improbable seemed what she had to say, so inco-

herent and confused was her manner of saying it, that when, at the end, she drew from under the pillow and thrust at him a loose handful of dirty, creased and crumpled letters and papers, the Doctor took them mechanically, while he stared at the stranger with puzzled eyes, wondering whether she was delirious or he was dazed.

Her name was Mrs. Eustace Talbot. Her husband—her dead husband—has been a great singer, though no one knew an artist in this accursed country. She was going to die, she knew. She was only thirty; but that was thirty years too much, and she was going to die. It was better so; there was a good God, after all, for he sometimes let people die. When she was dead, she wanted to have her child sent to England, to her husband's people. Her uncle, Sir Richard Talbot, would care for the little one. He was a great man—a very rich man—if it was any trouble to M. le docteur, he would be well paid for it. He was a demon, Sir Richard; but at least he was not *canaille;* he would take the child out of this *canaille* atmosphere that had killed her poor father and her poor mother. Sir Richard had a palace; he would take the child to his palace; she would learn to forget her miserable father and mother; it was best; she could only remember them as living among *canaille*—and so —the papers would tell all to M. le docteur—so let her die in peace.

This was told brokenly, excitement struggling with weakness. It ended in a piteous and feeble outcry over her sad case, over her unhappy life; and then she turned her back on Dr. Peters, with a movement of the shoulders that seemed to dismiss him and the world together. There was so much of the spoiled child in it, so much of hysterical affectation and exaggeration, that if the Doctor had not seen the unmistakable signs of death in the damp face, he would have taken it for an extreme case of invalid malingering.

All the while the little girl stood by the bedside, her large, dark, anxious eyes fixed on her mother. Their look of distressed comprehension was painfully mature; but her upper lip quivered in childish fashion, and her breast heaved with big breaths that were almost sobs. She still held the spoon, and at each breath it clicked softly against the glass in her other hand. She said not a word, and her gaze never once dropped from the sick woman's face.

The Doctor left the bedside and sat down under the one meagre gas-jet to glance over the letters. He was not ready to believe this story of rich and titled connections. But it was true, seemingly. He slowly shuffled over the soiled papers, lifting them up to the dim light, and they bore out the tale. They were mainly short notes from Sir Richard Talbot, of Pollard Hall, Stonehill, Kent, to his brother in Paris. They

were of an unfriendly tone, refusing or grudgingly allowing repeated demands for money. But they left no doubt that there was a Sir Richard Talbot, and that he had had a scapegrace brother named Eustace, and that this Eustace was an opera-singer.

He had scarcely run through them when he heard a new sound from the bed, and Mme. Goubaud bent quickly to look in the changing face. The Doctor crossed the room, but not before the child had thrown herself forward on the bed in a storm of tears and caressing cries and wild appeals to the spirit that was slipping away in dumb unconsciousness. She knew it; she had seen it before, inexorable death. There was no hope in her instinctive outcry; she saw, with wide staring eyes, the light sink out of the face and leave a hard, dull gray, a blank strangeness; and she knew what it meant.

She turned in quick, understanding obedience, when the Doctor drew her to him and held her face against his breast. For a moment it rested there motionless, and then her sobs broke forth, and her slim body shook and quivered in Dr. Peters's arms. He pressed her closer, and she clung to him and made no attempt to look behind her.

Madame Goubaud peered sharply into the still face, crossed herself, pressed her toilworn thumb down on the half-closed eyelids, and then, much

as she might have corded up a bundle of feathers, passed an old red print handkerchief under the dead chin, and tied the ends in a knot on top of the head.

Dr. Peters lifted up the girl in his arms. She yielded herself to him, keeping her face away from the bed until she could hide her eyes on his shoulder. He carried her out of the room. Alphonsine, the homely-faced, good-natured apprentice of the house of Goubaud, offered to take *la pauvre petite* in her own bed that night. They climbed the steep stairs to the little attic room where Alphonsine shivered of winter nights until, under the collection of rags that served her for a coverlid, she generated the animal warmth of healthful sleep.

It was a poor place for the child, bleak and bare and wind-ridden, and the desperate poverty of the tattered bed-clothes caught the Doctor's eye; but he thought of Mme. Goubaud's soulless, hard face downstairs, and he left the little one to the comfort and protection of Alphonsine's broad bosom.

CHAPTER II.

THE snow had ceased, the wind had risen, and the thermometer had fallen, when the Doctor set out for his home. It was late, too, past twelve, but he went out of his way to the little French undertaker's in Grand street. The undertaker was not in bed; he was "confectioning" an important commission, as he informed his visitor, and he crimped a piece of discolored satin and smiled cheerfully as he promised, with encouraging redundancy of assurances, that he would go around in the morning, and supply that hideously meagre attempt at a funeral which just saves the pride of the poor from the keen disgrace of the Potter's Field. A pine coffin, a hearse, one hack, and a share of a grave in some God-forsaken cemetery in New Jersey—you can have all these for twenty dollars.

And, that being settled, Dr. Peters went on to Washington Square, on the dark south side of which he found one late light glimmering in a high window. The house in which it shone stood a little back from the street, and looked

even darker and gloomier than those about it. The one pale light did not give an idea of home; there was nothing of expectant welcome about it; it rather suggested a weary and uncanny wakefulness, and made the Doctor feel that he ought to have been in bed hours before.

He let himself in with a great old-fashioned brass key, and toiled up the silent stairs, passing out of the region of perpetual cabbage only when he reached the third story.

He opened the door of his own private domain with some apprehension; but he found a bit of fire still in the grate—a fire of anthracite, clinkery, gassy, and dull, yet capable of revivification, and after a temporary eclipse under the blower, it brightened up and gave forth warmth after its kind.

The Doctor got into his slippers and his old "house-coat," while the fire was rekindling, and, late as it was, he lit his pipe and sat down with his soles close to the grate, to look over the papers in his pocket, for in addition to those he had received from Mrs. Talbot, M. Goubaud had seen fit to entrust to him a bundle of scrap-books, letters and odd documents found in the trunk with the theatrical raiment.

In the hour that he sat before the fire, he got at no more than the bare outlines of a story that in after years he was able to round out and fill up; but he had enough knowledge of the weak

side of human nature to form in that brief glance a judgment which better knowledge only confirmed.

He found out that Eustace Reginald Hunt Hunt Talbot was the son of Sir Hugh Talbot, vaguely described in various clippings from French papers as "un nobleman anglais." His mother was a Frenchwoman, the daughter of a rich banker, César Galifet. He had an uncle Antoine Galifet, a Gascon, supposed to be a man of vast wealth. Uncle Antoine desired that his nephew Eustace should be brought up in France, and it appeared that the Talbot family was very willing to oblige Uncle Antoine. There was reason, indeed, to believe that they were glad to get rid of Eustace, and that Eustace had given them cause for such gladness. He was sent to France at twelve years of age, put through *pension* and *collége*, and turned loose in Paris ten years after he left England. Uncle Antoine had probably had some little schemes of his own for shaping the future of his nephew; but, whatever they may have been, they came to naught. From 1852 to 1862, Mr. Eustace Talbot, whom his French friends, by some Gallic association of ideas, called M. le vicomte de Talbot, was a man-about-town in Paris. He had an allowance from Uncle Antoine, just large enough to make him wish that it was larger, and when he was very deeply in debt he applied to his father in Eng-

land, who generally sent him half the money he asked for, and just twice as much advice as he had use for. There was nothing to show that he had much to do with the "serious" society of Paris; he was a club man, a little of a rake, a little of a gambler, a handsome, amiable, superficially clever, and fairly accomplished young buck. He found his associates among the fast young Frenchmen who were in the theatre-lobbies when they were not in the theatre dressing-rooms, and among that interesting class of aristocratic Englishmen who occasionally found it convenient to pass a few months in Paris, waiting for something or other to "blow over." He was a good shot, a fair fencer, and an amateur singer — a tenor — of some repute. Various "Chronicles of the Day" spoke of him as "le Mario du Cercle Anglais." There were two or three silvery, rouged daguerreotypes of him, taken about this time, and they showed him as with a black moustache and black whiskers—a sort of modified Newgate Collar—much black, curly hair, a swelling chest and a flashing eye, and most marvelous waistcoats. He was doubtless a handsome man, in a consciously Byronic way.

Somewhere about 1857 Uncle Antoine died, and his vast wealth turned out to be a modest patrimony, to which he had added not one sou, in the course of a long, frugal and industrious

life as a gentleman-farmer. Mr. Eustace Talbot, who had grumbled at his allowance, grumbled still more when he received his inheritance, and showed his contempt for the pitiful sum by spending it all in four or five years. In 1862 he found himself stranded. His father was dead, and his brother Richard was now the head of the house. And Brother Richard, when applied to for ready money, honored the draft with even more advice and even less money than had seemed proper to his excellent father. So it came to pass that Mr. Eustace Talbot, being thirty-four, somewhat faded as a buck and as a social success in the Paris clubs, having many debts and no more credit, and being possessed still of a reasonably pleasing face and figure, and a nice little *voix de salon*, well cultivated, went on the stage, and made a successful first appearance at the Italiens, singing a small part in Mario's company.

Hereabouts in the story the documentary material became voluminous, while the solid information to be derived therefrom grew disproportionately meagre. There were dozens of newspaper paragraphs, polite criticisms and undisguised puffs, so worded as to feed the vanity of the man at and of whom they were written, and to show to the cold and unprejudiced reader that the poor devil had made a second-class, second-rate success of the moment.

Then, in 1865, before the success, such as it

was, had quite faded away, Mr. Eustace Talbot married Mlle. Lodoiska Leczynska. There was little to be learned about Mlle. Leczynska. The Doctor, who had seen Mrs. Talbot die an hour before, could readily believe what the *Petit Figaro* said of her in 1865—that she was seventeen years of age, ravishingly beautiful, *svelte* and *brune*, and that she belonged to an aristocratic family of Poland. But that was all that the Doctor was destined to know of her origin—all, perhaps, that she herself knew. Talbot had found her, a mere child, in some little foreign colony quartered in Bohemian Paris—a respectable, decent, poverty-stricken, artistic, pretentious little set of people—there was enough in the notices of the wedding to show that much—and he had married her out of hand. It was a love-match, pure and simple, and the love, at least, lasted: not in its first flush of ideal beauty, perhaps; but it lasted.

Sir Richard, in England, stormed. He thought his brother had disgraced the family name when he took to the stage; but this marriage was something not to be forgiven. His wounded pride led him to button his pocket all the closer.

Then the hard times came to the Eustace Talbots. For the first year they found life a merry game enough. They were poor; but it was with the picturesque, easy-going poverty of Bohemia. Their hardships were picnicking hardships, and they rather enjoyed roughing it. Talbot pro-

cured engagements to sing in the Provinces, and he had an Englishman's faculty for getting credit, and so they went merrily through the twelvemonth. But at the end of it the baby was born —they christened her Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot, and she weighed seven pounds when she went to the font—and after that it was poverty out and out, bare, hard, shabby, degrading, worrying, toilsome, troubled, ugly poverty. The provinces had grown tired of M. le vicomte de Talbot, with his swelling chest and his *voix de salon* and his handsome dandy face, with the crow's-feet around the corners of his eyes. Paris laughed at him when he tried to get back into grand opera; and when he got down to singing in vaudeville at the "Folies Sylphides," Paris absolutely refused to laugh at him, and voted him a bore.

And so, at last, they had to go on the road in frank vagabondage, and they wandered hither and thither, all over Europe, going anywhere where anybody would pay for the well-meant labors of a gentlemanly amateur who had once sung with Mario at the Salle Ventadour, and who would now give you "la Pipe de Mon Oncle" or "Mariette, Mariette, Ousqué la crevette?" and other pleasing ballads of the day, at five francs a ballad. Spas, baths, gambling-places, seaside towns, they tried them all, and their beggarly pilgrimage took them north, south, east and west. And all the

time the little *voix de salon* grew thinner and reedier, the crow's-feet sank deeper, the marvelous waistcoats grew shabbier and duller.

The seven-pound baby was growing up and going through the education of Bohemia. The wife was sickly, helpless, loving, faithful, and forever complaining. Talbot carried his shabby gentility with a swagger, gambled a little, drank a little, sometimes made his wife more or less jealous, and never forgot—or said he never forgot—that he was an artist, an English gentleman, and one whom the world had used most vilely.

They were a happy family, too. They were all satisfied with themselves, and rich in complacent self-conceit, and they hung together loyally. True, Mr. Eustace Talbot's vanity occasionally marred the harmony; but only to bring about a completer unison, for his wife extracted a certain proud satisfaction from any testimony to the charms of the husband whom she had learned to worship as a demigod when she was a school-girl and he was a dashing young buck of thirty-seven. He must have had crow's-feet then; he certainly had them now; but she had never seen them.

It did not require much imagination to picture the life they led—slipshod, needy, happy-go-lucky; pretentious at its very slovenliest; full of disappointments, humiliations and embarrassments. And through it all, in cheap lodging-

houses and cheaper hotels, vulgarized by the enforced familiarities of poverty, much tried, often disillusioned, love sat down and rose up with them, and sweetened their bitter bread.

America was the end of it. Europe was exhausted after ten or eleven years of assiduous debt-sowing, and they turned to the land of gold and barbarians, where artists and gentlemen must certainly be at a premium. Sir Richard was called upon for help—positively for the last time—and he doled out fifty pounds for the privilege of having three thousand miles between himself and his brother.

They were not long in finding out that America is no place for an artist. After many rebuffs, the thin *voix de salon* piped its last—given a chance out of pure charity—in a wretched Bowery theatre, where the gallery-boys "guyed" it with cruel applause. And in the very first of the winter a young clerk at Bellevue Hospital grinned as he wrote down in his report to the Bureau of Vital Statistics the elaborate name of Eustace Reginald Hunt Hunt Talbot, dead of typhoid fever.

The rest Dr. Peters knew, of his own personal knowledge—except that he never knew, nor cared to know by what hideous shifts and devices the few dollars left out of Sir Richard's fifty pounds had carried mother and child over the three months since the father had fallen sick.

The Doctor's fire was out. He kicked it, and brought down a shower of white ashes and grey cinders. He rose, and, gathering up the papers with a long-drawn whistle that ended in a sigh, he put them in his desk; and as he did so he said aloud—he had the old bachelor's habit of brief soliloquy—"Queer world, by jingo—powerful queer world!"

Then, as had been his habit every night for thirteen years, he stalked into the work-room that lay behind his "living-room," and looked at the accumulation of wrought metal that represented his work since 1865, when he set out to invent the ideal cannon. He laid a caressing hand upon the latest of his models, and looked at it for a moment, knitting his brows, as though he thought that perhaps the secret of success might be revealed to him in that glance. It was not, and he turned away, with a grim half-smile, and crossed the living-room again to the little hall-bedroom where his bachelor couch, virginal white, awaited him.

CHAPTER III.

THE Doctor awoke the next morning with a special sense of duty to be performed. His days were monotonous enough to make this feeling somewhat of a pleasant surprise. The day, indeed, generally brought its duty of charity or benevolence; but it mostly took the form of a casual call upon his sympathy, the precise nature of which he could not foresee. And, as a rule, he had to minister only to accidental and temporary needs. As he himself put it, it was somebody everlastingly breaking legs at odd times.

But this time he felt that he had a case on his hands. He had had no chance to accept or refuse the trust Mrs. Talbot had sought to impose upon him. Death had settled that matter. To shirk the obligation now would be, he thought, to take an unfair advantage of the dead woman. Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot was to be handed over to her uncle in England, and he was to do it. He made no more question of that than he would have made fifteen years before had the work been allotted to him by order of his superior officer.

The first thing to be done was to get an appropriation from the French Benevolent Society, for the burying of the mother and for the maintenance of the child until such time as Sir Richard Talbot should take charge of her. Old Luise, who "did for" him, brought the Doctor's breakfast—a scanty and uninviting meal of fried eggs and baker's bread—at half-past seven; and at eight he was at the rooms of the Benevolent Society, and the chirrupy, bald-headed little Secretary was inquiring what he could do for his "good fran' Pittairss."

His good friend Peters had been on similar errands many a time before, and went about the business with good-humored patience. The Secretary lifted his shoulders and raised his eyebrows and threw up his hands with little gestures of deprecation, and cast a faint shade of polite doubt on each separate statement, while the Doctor told his story and made his requests. It looked very discouraging; but it meant nothing; it was all a matter of form. And after a proper time the Secretary expressed himself satisfied that, in spite of her name (for the father had always sung as "Eustace Talbot"), the orphan waif was a genuine child of France, and, as such, entitled to relief at the hands of the Society. That it was the Society's duty to bury the mother he was not so clear. He wanted to compromise the matter.

"Doctor Pittairss," he said, with a humorous grimace of hopeless persuasion: "You ar-r-r reech—we 'av moch to do—manny sings to *at*-ten' to—w'y you don't help us—eh? You give 'alf, eh?"

"Not much," the Doctor placidly replied: "this is none of my funeral, Peloubet."

"All a-'ight," chirruped the little Secretary: "se more you *Am*mery-can millionaires you 'ave monnee, se more you ar-r-r stingy, an' se more you talk slangue. Vair' well." His tone changed, and he laid a friendly hand on the Doctor's shoulder: "Eet is all a-'ight, my fran'. I sink sair will be no trobble. We bary se mosser, I sink. I let you know, anny 'ow. Catholique, eh?"

"No," said the Doctor, speaking promptly out of his profound ignorance: "Protestant."

The Secretary's face fell. This statement seemed to open the question of nationality once more—that is, he tried to look as though he thought it did. But this was again only a matter of form. The Secretary knew Dr. Peters well, and he had handled Dr. Peters's money, and the success of the application had been a foregone conclusion. He wore a doubtful frown as he saw the Doctor to the door; but within an hour he had put the Benevolent machinery in motion, and it was settled that the expenses of Mrs. Talbot's funeral were to be met by the Society, and

that the child's board was to be paid at Mme. Goubaud's for three weeks at least, by which time Sir Richard might be heard from. Dr. Peters was to attend to that part of the business, they had agreed. It was the Doctor's own proposition. He felt that there was no necessity for further exposure of the skeletons in the Talbot's family closet.

The cold clearing up of the night before had given way to a day of broken weather—pale sunshine and sharp snow-flurries. The dry little crystals tickled the Doctor's face as he strode across Washington Square to find the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt, who was the clergyman in charge of the Mission Chapel of the Church of St. Gregorius.

He did not feel quite easy in his mind about getting Pratt to perform the funeral service, although it seemed to be, on the whole, the best thing to do. He had a tender conscience, and it hurt him to think that perhaps, in spite of her petulant cynicism, the dead woman had been a Catholic at heart, and that she might have resented the idea of being laid to rest with alien rites. But then he did not wish to go to Father Dubé. Dubé was worth a dozen of Pratt; but Dubé had his peculiarities. He was a hard-worked, conscientious priest, much wearied in spirit, and in his two hundred pounds of flesh, by the endless needs of his ever-straggling flock,

and he drew the line of indulgence at impenitent death. It was enough, he thought, for people to neglect religion and morality and soap-and-water all their lives; when they came to die, the least they could do was to die in the church, and give their poor old pastor a chance to do something for their immortal souls at the one time when they couldn't possibly undo it themselves.

This was Father Dubé's idea, although he never formulated it exactly in this way. And so Dr. Peters felt a little delicacy about calling upon him to say mass for the stranger who had gone out of the world in a distinctly irreligious frame of mind. And Pratt would do just as well. It would never occur to Pratt to inquire whether or no the departed sister over whom he was to read the service had really been a good Church-of-England woman. He lived in a state of mild surprise at the fact that there actually were people in this world who did not belong to the Church of England. If Dr. Peters asked him to read the service for the burial of the dead, he would read it, as a matter of course. He talked to the Doctor, whenever they met, about abstruse points of ecclesiastical law and custom, and he did his duty in the parish, and went away, afterward, when he was called to other fields of labor, without once dreaming that Peters had never understood the first word of his deliverances.

Dr. Peters's religious views had the haziness of extreme catholicity. In his childhood, when his parents were pillars of the Episcopal church in their little village in Oneida county, he had been brought up to look upon a Romanist as something nearly as bad as a Jew, in a different way, and not very far removed in guilt from the heathen. Later life, and much experience of sore-tried humanity, had taught him a lesson of wider charity. He had grown to think better of all creeds—and less of any particular one. Now, he was Father Dubé's friend, and the friend of the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt, and the friend of Brother Strong, of the Bethel. And he liked the Roman Catholic priest best of the three.

The Reverend Mr. Pratt, seated in his study at a very big desk, stroked his thin brown whiskers and rubbed his prominent nose, as he dubiously assented to Dr. Peters's proposition that the woman should be buried that day. He had never quite reconciled himself, he said, to the almost indecent haste so frequently practiced in the inhumation of the dead among the poorer classes. He would not go so far as to call it irreligious; but it certainly was repugnant to proper feeling.

"Well, you see, Mr. Pratt," said the Doctor, taking him patiently, as he had taken the Secretary of the Benevolent Society, "it can't very

well be helped. We can't ask those Goubaud people to keep the body of a strange woman there. They are poor, you know, and they've had a great deal of trouble with the family already. And then they're Catholics."

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Pratt.

"And there's the child. It'll be better for *her* to get it all over at once, don't you think so? Remember Biedermann's little girl, who stole down in the night and sat by her father's coffin, and went out of her head? She has n't been right since."

The Reverend Mr. Pratt vaguely remembered the occurrence. The Biedermann's were of Father Dubé's flock.

"There's no doubt about it," he observed: "those unfortunate people" (he meant the Catholics) "go to the other extreme, and postpone the last offices in a very unwise way."

"It's hard on the children," the Doctor went on; "and then, you know, it isn't as if we meant to show any disrespect. *You* know how it is among the poor, Mr. Pratt."

"Indeed I do; indeed I do," said Mr. Pratt, promptly. He smiled complacently.

"Well, I'll be there at four o'clock, Dr. Peters. I'm sure people ought to be very grateful to you—taking all this trouble about things. It's my duty, of course—it's the field in which I expect—and hope—to be of service.

But I'm sure it shows a very humane spirit in you, Dr. Peters, it does indeed."

* * * * *

The little undertaker had to receive his final directions, and then the Doctor took his noon-day sandwich and glass of beer at the Brasserie Pigault, and went home to write a laborious letter to Sir Richard Talbot. This task took much time, for Dr. Peters had the true American sensitiveness about risking a possible snub. He would have chatted with the first tramp he met on a country road; but he did not like to introduce himself to an English baronet, even to do the baronet a favor. Moreover, he had to make it very clear to this aristocratic stranger that he, Peters, was a disinterested agent in the business.

"Can't tell anything about Englishmen," he reflected; "he might want to 'tip me 'arf-a-crown,' or something."

It was nearly four o'clock when he went to the house of Goubaud. All preparations had been made, and his first inquiry was for the child. She was by her mother's coffin, Alphonsine told him with sympathy both effusive and honest—the poor little one, it was heart-rending, she did not cry,—she was not a child at all—and she would eat nothing. But it was cruel! she would eat nothing at all—not even candy. Alphonsine had purchased her seven cents worth of candy;

but she would not eat it. Perhaps she would eat if M. le docteur spoke to her.

"Let her be," he said; "she'll eat when nature tells her to. She'll come to it in time—she's young. There's candy yet in the world for her. But I'll go up and see if I ain't clumsy enough to make her cry. That's much more necessary."

When he entered the room up stairs the child was sitting by the coffin, as Alphonsine had said; but she rose instantly, and came to meet him before he could cross the threshold, stretching out her small hand in silence, giving him one glance as she did so, and then lowering her tearless dark eyes. It was an absolutely unchildlike greeting, and it conveyed a subtle hint that she did not wish him to come nearer to her dead.

He sat down on a chair by the door and drew her to him. She passively yielded as he put his arm about her; but when he made a motion to lift her to his knee, she stopped him with a quick instinctive little gesture. There was something of gentle, innocent rebuke in her attitude, as though he had made light of her grief.

"My dear," he began, softly and somewhat nervously, "we must take your mother away from you before very long."

"When?" she asked, without looking at him.

"The clergyman will be here at four o'clock."

"So soon?" she cried, with a little shiver, and a quick look of appeal and question.

"Yes, my dear. It's the best way. Yes, I know it's hard; but it would be harder if we were to put it off. And now you'll be a brave girl, won't you, and —"

She would not let him finish, but broke in with her oddly mature self-restraint:

"Yes. Better. I see. *They* do not want her here. It is well."

"'Tisn't that, my child. Madame Goubaud does not mean to be unkind —"

"I know. She knows not better. I comprehend, monsieur."

The Doctor felt curiously embarrassed. He wished she would act like a child. A vague idea passed through his mind, that he would like to know whether she had ever played with a doll.

"How old are you?" he asked, in perplexity.

"I have twelve years," she answered, curtly. Then, after a pause, with a sudden petulance,—"I am no more a child."

The Doctor smiled. She was a child, after all.

"Well, now," he said, "I'm forty, and I'm a good deal of a child yet."

She gave him another quick, timid look, as if apprehensive of some levity or insincerity.

"Yes, my dear," he went on, holding her more firmly within his arm—she did not resist: "I'm a good deal older than you, and I've got gray hairs—look at 'em—but I should feel sorry, I

should, if I got too old to remember what it was to be a child. Gray hairs don't make a man old. I know how I felt when I was just your age, and I know just how you feel now. I lost my own mother when I was two years older than you are, and I remember all about it, as if it was yesterday. I'd like to tell you how it was."

He paused a moment.

"Shall I tell you about it?"

She kept her face averted and her eyes cast down; but she nodded assent.

"She'd been sick a long time; but when she died, it was very sudden, and I wasn't there. I've often wished since then I'd been there to kiss her good-bye, or help take care of her, or do something to show that I loved her. But I didn't know anything about it until they told me. And then I felt—I can't tell you how I felt. But it seemed to me as if I was the lonesomest boy on earth. And I didn't dare to cry, either: I'd have felt a lot better if I could have cried; but I didn't dare to. My father was a severe, stern sort of man, and he didn't believe in people's crying, or laughing, either. If I'd have cried, he'd have sent me to bed. And I couldn't stand that —lying in bed and thinking how lonesome I was. Besides, I was fourteen years old, and I thought I was too big a boy to cry."

He stole a glance at the pale face. He saw that the child was listening to him.

"Well, I went out in the yard, just to get away from the people. Folks in my time were a sort of *hard*—I don't think they quite understood us young ones—they didn't seem to care much about us. So I went out into the yard. And there was an old nigger, named Japhet, who used to chop wood for my father. Uncle Japhe, we called him. He was out there in the woodshed. And when he saw me, what do you think that old nigger did? Why, he didn't say one word—he just caught hold of me and hauled me right up to him, with his arm around my head, and my face up against his ragged old coat, and he held me there, and I just *cried*—cried like a baby, with that old nigger holding on to me. It couldn't bring mother back, but —"

She was melting. Her head was still bent down; but he could feel her breath come short and quick; and with one hand she plucked at his coat-sleeve, pinching the cloth between her fingers, letting it slip and picking it up again as if she found relief in the mechanical action.

"It didn't seem so lonesome then, when I had Uncle Japhe, for all he was only an old nigger. There's lots of help in this world, if we'll only just let ourselves be helped. Don't you think so?"

He slipped his arm around her neck, and with a sudden sob that was almost a cry, she pressed her face against his breast. But just then the door

347709

opened, and she struggled free, and stood up, her eyes moist and her teeth together, to face the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt.

The Reverend Mr. Pratt stood in the doorway, looking disapprovingly on two small candles that flickered at the head of the coffin. He had confided his overcoat to M. Goubaud, who stood behind him. He had moreover impressed M. Goubaud into the service of the Church; and had made the unwilling Frenchman assist him in putting on his surplice. M. Goubaud's face expressed disgust, subdued by politeness. He did not like the appearance of a Protestant clergyman in his Catholic house; and he was inclined to look on the Church of England ritual with critical contempt.

Mr. Pratt waited a moment to make up his mind that it would be unadvisable to demand the suppression of the candles, and then advanced with amiable dignity and laid his hand on the girl's head.

"You are very young, my child," he said, solemnly, "to bear such a heavy weight of affliction."

There was no answer.

"We cannot tell, any of us, why these trials are sent," he further observed, and then, becoming conscious of the little one's complete unresponsiveness, he concluded, blandly:

"I will talk with you at some future time, my child. Dr. Peters —?"

Dr. Peters answered with a look of assent. Everything was ready. The little undertaker and his assistant were posted near the door, and the household of Goubaud, domestic and operative, had filed in and ranged along the walls of the small room; the workmen hiding their hands behind their backs, the palms outward. Alphonsine rolled her round red arms in her apron, and looked tearfully across at the little orphan, who still stood by the Doctor's side, erect and silent. She did not lean against him; but as the service went on, she let his arm draw closer about her, and when the ashes fell from the clergyman's hand upon the coffin top, she caught her friend's fingers in an impulsive clutch.

Even poor Pratt's thin voice could not spoil the beauty of the words he spoke. As his high tones rang out through the silent house, in rhythmic rise and fall, the little man seemed to take on something of the dignity of the greater spirits whose speech he echoed. Peters sat and listened, and forgot the cold little room, the dull, poverty-stricken faces around him, the ghastly pine coffin on its staring trestles: memory slipping back to the country church on summer Sundays, where the wind shook the leaves about the open casements, the birds twittered outside, all through service and sermon, while the old pastor's sonorous cadences fell on the unheeding ears of a yellow-haired boy, sitting in the front pew, his restless

legs swinging half a foot above the floor, his whole boy's soul yearning to be out in the fields and the fresh air, angrily resenting the necessity of wasting a morning of sunshine and clear sky. He looked down at the subdued young face at his side, and pitied the child who had so soon learned the lesson of self-restraint and patience. After her hand had grasped his, she let it lie there through the brief service; but she did not cry, and her eyes never once left the coffin. When the last word was said, she went unresistingly with Alphonsine, and put on her worn little hat and jacket.

There was one shabby carriage behind the shabby hearse. Mme. Goubaud, in her Sunday clothes, got in first, and took the child on the seat with her. Then the Reverend Mr. Pratt climbed in, and M. Goubaud followed. Business was dull, and the chance of riding in state as chief mourners at a funeral—even a Protestant funeral—was not to be missed. This had been Mme. Goubaud's opinion, and when Mme. Goubaud thought that anything justified an interruption of business, her husband never questioned the propriety of her decision. Her face bore a look of stern importance as she sat on the back seat of the carriage and gazed fixedly before her, ignoring a staring world.

Dr. Peters stood irresolutely on the sidewalk. Mr. Pratt looked as if he expected his fellow

church-member to be one of the party; but there was no place for the Doctor, unless he took the child on his lap, and he hesitated. The driver settled it by starting up his horses, and the Doctor turned away, but not too soon to see the girl look up with pained, surprised eyes, that mutely accused him of deserting her.

"I ought to have gone," he said to himself. But it was too late, the carriage was rattling down the street after the jolting hearse, and he could only stare at it until it grew gray behind a veil of whirling snowflakes.

"I ought to have gone," he thought, and the remembrance of that piteous look went with him all the rest of the day.

CHAPTER IV.

HE found it hard to get rid of that look. He was not sentimental; he had always had that understanding with himself, that he was not sentimental. And there are those who would call his code of morals lax. But there were some matters in which he had an uneasy, child-like sensitiveness of conscience. To be suspected, even, of the most trivial carelessness in the payment of his debts; to be thought unkind or discourteous to children and women,—these things wounded him sorely. Not that he very greatly troubled himself about the world's opinion of him, but that any suggestion of remissness in these particulars filled him with self-accusing doubts. It was a part of his old-bachelor fussiness, perhaps.

Therefore he was troubled to think that he had left the child to the charitable offices of the Goubaud family and the Reverend Mr. Pratt, at the most trying ordeal of the day. They all meant well, those three people, but they were a good deal like the folks who had made his boyhood gloomy. They did not understand chil-

dren. Being a child himself, the Doctor felt this strongly. He thought of the long, cold ride to the New Jersey cemetery; the unrelieved ugliness of the hurried interment, the probable remarks of the Reverend Mr. Pratt on the way home, and he felt that he could have smoothed the rough path of the little girl with the long name, if he had taken her on his knee in the carriage. Well, it could not be helped now; but, all the same, he was uncomfortable. He went home and tried to work, but he made a poor hand at it.

The light was bad, for one thing, and he was not in the mood for work upon the cannon. He reflected, with some perturbation of spirit, that he had of late been conscious of a certain lack of interest in the cannon. The perfection of that invention had been his hobby for thirteen years. He had worked over it, thought over it, pottered and played with it. It had stimulated his ambition and amused him in his idleness. To be sure, it had never come to anything, and it gave no signs of coming to anything. It had changed its form over and over again, but somehow it was always a little behind the latest discoveries in gun building. The Doctor tried to keep up with the march of progress, but he was always—he frankly admitted to himself—far back in the tail of the procession. Once he had got a small appropriation from the government;

and he had built his gun and taken it to Fort Hamilton for trial, and there it had burst. It had not injured any one, because, as the inventor grimly remarked, no one had had faith enough in it to stand near it when it went off. There was a flaw in the casting; it was not his fault; but the appropriation was exhausted, and the gun was untried; and before he could apply for another appropriation, the march of progress made it necessary to re-invent the gun after the latest fashion.

He had gone at it cheerfully enough, and modeled and remodeled, and it was only recently that he had begun to feel as if his patient tinkering was but a sham sort of work.

"Great Scott!" he thought, in dismal amusement, "am I getting too old to make-believe any longer?"

It really looked as though he had reached a second time that sad period when we realize that our toys are toys, and not,—what was it that we thought them?

The Doctor's domain was extensive. Five years after his return from the war he had taken the two upper floors of the old house, on a fifteen years' lease. He had tried to get a lease for a longer term, but even the conservative old German who was his landlord knew that rents would go up as the years went on; and fifteen years was the longest period for which he would

agree to let Dr. Peters have the rooms at the modest rate that they then commanded.

He had wanted a home, this lonely bachelor stranded after the great war. Bachelors sometimes want homes; they even long for them with a conscious, understanding, intelligent desire that their married friends never credit them with. "You don't know what it is to have a *home*," says Smith, who married at twenty-five, to Jones, who is unmarried at forty. But Jones does know what it would be to have a home, for does he not know what it is not to have a home? Ay, far more than complacent Smith, who made his nest from mere blind instinct, long before he could have become conscious of his own need of a nest—far more than happy, comfortable, satisfied Smith, does this lone bird of celibacy of a Jones know of the superiority of a consecrated abiding-place to his cold casual twig.

There is always something comically, dismally pathetic about the bachelor's attempt to construct a home. I was once at the performance of an opera attempted by a weak little theatrical troupe that was in bad luck. The tenor had failed them at the last moment, so a good-looking supernumerary stood up in the tenor's clothes while the poor hard-working, middle-aged soprano sang both parts of their duets. That is what the bachelor tries to do—to sing both parts of a duet.

It is always a failure; and so the Doctor found it. He had his bed-room, his sitting-room and his work-room, and upstairs was his kitchen and his servants' room. They were all good rooms, each after its kind. They were furnished as he liked; they were warm enough in winter and cool enough in summer. Each one had four walls, a floor and a ceiling. And yet they were not a home; and he had not been a day in them before he knew this.

For a little while he tried to discover and supply the elusive deficiency; but after a time he realized that the upholsterer could not do it for him; that it was not a matter of easy chairs, of pictures on the walls; that the light and warmth that were lacking were not born of lamps and fires. It was a twig, after all; not a nest; and he made up his mind to it.

He had furnished his kitchen with elaborate care, reproducing, as far as memory would serve him, the generous equipment of the old Dutch household in which he had passed his boyhood. He had had a fancy to install there the blackest and oldest Virginia negress that he could find; but he never carried out the scheme. The shriveled German woman whom he had engaged to "do for" him temporarily continued to do for him; and now, after eight years, it seemed probable that she would continue to do for him as long as he could sustain life on her cooking.

He threw down his tools and wandered listlessly about the rooms. In the sitting-room he noticed how faded was the green reps covering the furniture, and how worn was the old-fashioned Brussels carpet. He glanced through the open door of the bed-room. It looked like what it was—a place to sleep in. No one would ever have thought of stretching out on that painfully clean and prim little bed to while away an afternoon with pipe and book. He stared out of the window at Washington Square, and saw the bare trees waiting sullenly in the gray twilight for the next snow-squall to buffet them about and rack and rattle their poor dry twigs.

All these things he observed without fairly realizing their ugliness; but with a vague sense of lonely discomfort, which he did not quite understand. It had been growing on him of late.

"Perhaps it's Luise's cooking," he thought: "I ought to be inured to it; but maybe it's like arsenic or morphine—sort of cumulative poison. I guess I'm getting dyspeptic."

He went up stairs to take a look at the kitchen and see if he could conjure up again his old dream of a "nigger cook" of his own. Perhaps that might be the salvation of his bachelor life, after all.

It was a good kitchen, there was no doubt about that. Luise had never brought out its

possibilities. There was a huge range, that would have cooked a dinner for a regiment. Hanging up on the wall was the Dutch oven that he had had made eight years ago, on the model of the one in his mother's house, sketched from memory. Luise had never used the Dutch oven. There were ample cupboards, stocked with yellow crockery, bowls and pitchers and shallow dishes, more than Luise could ever use. And she grumbled at having to keep them clean. The back hall-bedroom had been fitted up for a pantry. It was quite as large as his mother's pantry; and he had fondly dreamed of filling it with jars of jam and preserves and pickles, and of ranging pallid disks of pie on the long shelves. The jars were there, along with the pie-plates—yes, there was even a great stick of sealing-wax to seal the preserves up with, in the old-fashioned way—but jars and plates were empty.

The whole place really seemed to cry aloud for a good plain cook. He pondered, as he descended the stairs, over the problem. Could he get the cook, and would she, once got, realize his fond dreams? And—coming down to a necessary preliminary—had he the moral courage to get rid of Luise?

He was sensible of a guilty feeling of shame and fear when Luise brought him his dinner that night. He looked at her shamefacedly as he tried to make up his mind whether any other

woman could be quite as ugly as she was, or whether nature held somewhere among her monstrosities and mistakes a pendant to that parboiled face.

He tried to think charitably of Luise; but there was no room for doubt about the dinner. It was simply bad. Many people like German cooking; but nobody could like Luise's German cooking. She had a way of announcing the names of the dishes, as she set them down with a vicious slam, and she had told him that the viand of the evening was a "Wiener Schnitzel." He credited her with forethought in this, for if she had not done so, he would not have been able to guess the fact that what was before him had once been a veal cutlet.

He smoked two pipes after his dinner, and then he went around to the Brasserie Pigault. For fourteen years he had gone to the Brasserie Pigault. When he first set up his bachelor establishment, he had resolved to stay at home of nights, and for a month or two the Brasserie had missed him, and he had sat in his green reps easy-chair, that was not, and never could have been meant to be easy, before his meagre little hard-coal fire. But it was not staying at home, after all; it was only staying in the house; and by and by he went back to the Brasserie Pigault, which was a home indeed, after its sort, to him and to many another lonely bachelor.

If you put it that a man habitually spends his evenings in a beer-shop, it does not sound well. It not only suggests orgies and deep potations, but it is *low*. One thinks of Robert Burns, of the police-reports, of neglected wives waiting at home, of brawls and drunkenness and of a cheap grade of tobacco.

This is largely due to the influence of a number of estimable gentlemen who wander about this broad land, patronizing second-class hotels and denouncing in scathing terms the Demon Drink. They sternly refuse to admit any distinction between one place where liquor is sold and another place where liquor is sold. Yet I think the most vehement of these public-spirited men would be inclined to acknowledge that there is a bright side to the beer question if he could be induced to pass a few evenings, non-professionally, in such a place as the Brasserie Pigault.

True, he could not see there the red-eyed contention that furnishes him with so much useful oratorical material. No upraised bludgeon, no gleaming stiletto would gladden his eyes. No degraded specimen of humanity would point a prohibitionist's moral by going to sleep on the floor. No ribaldry would agreeably shock his expectant ears.

He would see Mme. Pigault, neat and comely, knitting behind her desk. He would see Mr. Martin and M. Ovide Marié at their everlasting

game of dominos. He would see little Potain, whose wife died two years ago, after forty-seven years of married life, and who would be more lonely than he is, if it were not for Mme. Pigault's hospitality, drinking his one glass of *vermouth gommé*, and reading all the papers without missing a column. He would see poor old Parker Prout, the artist, who has been painting all day long for the Nassau Street auction shops—they will not hang Prout's pictures, even at the National Academy—and who has come to the Brasserie Pigault to buy one glass of beer for himself, and to wait and hope that somebody will come in who will buy another for him. He would see good-natured Jack Wilder, the bright young reporter of the *Morning Record*, dropping in to perform that act of charity, and to square accounts by mildly chaffing old Prout about the art which he still loves, after forty years of servitude to the auctioneer and the maker of chromo-lithographs. He would see Dr. Peters taking his regular rations—two glasses of lager, the first of each keg—and studying the *Courrier* to keep up his French.

And on this particular night there was a rare guest to be seen under Mme. Pigault's roof, for Father Dubé came in, big, ponderous and genial, rubbing his fat red hands, and smiling a sociable benediction upon the place and all within it.

Mme. Pigault, alert and flattered, rose to wel-

come him, and he unbuttoned his heavy overcoat, with its great cape, and leaned on the desk to chat with her for a moment. How was the baby and little Eulalie? And business was always good? That was to be expected. People knew where they were comfortable, and everybody was comfortable *chez Mme. Pigault.* And now he saw his good friend the Doctor sitting there. The Doctor looked as if he would like a little game of dominos. He would go and challenge his good friend the Doctor. And yes, why not? He would take a glass of that excellent Chablis of Mme. Pigault's, that he had tasted when he had last visited Mme. Pigault. Was it so long ago as Easter? Ah, but the time goes! And an old man is slow. He cannot see his friends as often as he could wish. And Mme. Pigault, being prosperous and blessed by heaven, has no need of him. Ah, the Doctor is waiting. And Mme. Pigault will not forget the Chablis?

And so this simple-minded old priest, who knew no better than to sit down in his parishioner's *brasserie* and take a glass of wine and play a game of dominos with a heretic, lumbered over to the Doctor's table, and struggled out of his overcoat, with Louis's help, and sat down opposite his good friend Peters. And Louis bustled eagerly about, and opened a new bottle of the Chablis, and brought the box with the best dominos, that Mme. Pigault took from her desk; and

cleaned a slate; and Mme. Pigault looked on proudly as her favorite customer and her spiritual guide shuffled and drew.

Father Dubé had come to this country at the age of twelve; and it was his boast that his English was as good as his French, for if the English was a trifle stiff, the French was not quite academic.

"I hear," he said, "that you have been poaching on my preserves, and stealing a whole French family from my fold."

There was just a trace of the foreigner in the precision and emphasis with which he brought out the figure of speech, in conversational quotation marks. It was a joke of long standing between these two that the priest on one side and the Doctor and the Reverend Mr. Pratt on the other, were engaged in an active warfare of proselytism.

"No, sir," the Doctor answered, smiling, "I deny the imputation. The family you refer to has long been a pillar of the Church of England."

"It is for that reason, then," Father Dubé suggested, slyly, "that the French Benevolent Society has taken charge of the case. I saw Peloubet this afternoon."

The Doctor flushed a little.

"The mother was born in France, as near as I can find out; and the child certainly was. But they're Protestants, all the same."

The priest's broad hand was stretched across the table, overturning and exposing half-a-dozen of the dominos he had been laboriously standing on end, and he gently patted the Doctor's sleeve.

"My good friend, that is all right. I know. I know. It is your 'set,' is it not?"

The Doctor smiled and flushed a little redder, conscious of his own sensitiveness.

"Double-six. Oh, you want me to keep the slate?" Father Dubé had pushed it across to him. "I say, Dubé, I'm glad you spoke of it. I want to ask you something."

"Fifteen. What is it?"

"It's about the child." The Doctor was silent for a minute, knitting his brows as he played on mechanically. "I don't know that I've done particularly well in letting the Society leave her where she is. You know that Goubaud family better than I do."

"They are decent people."

"Oh, I know that. But, you see, here's the way it is. This child's a girl—thin little thing, about twelve years old or so, and high-strung—the most high-strung, old-fashioned, queer little witch I ever saw. And old woman Goubaud—well, she isn't exactly what you'd call high-strung herself."

"If I know what you mean by 'high-strung' —no."

"Nervous—sensitive—delicate—all that kind

of thing. These people,—these Talbots,—seem to have been pretty poor; but they were rather a swell lot at the start, and I don't think this mite has been accustomed to any sort of rough, unsympathetic treatment. I shouldn't like to leave her there if I thought the old woman was going to make it hard for her."

"I shall have to draw." The priest shrugged his shoulders, and took a pinch of snuff, offering the box to the Doctor, who bowed, and waved it away. The proffer had been made and declined many hundred times in the course of their intimacy. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty," the Father went on: "poverty is hard, and they have grown hard in their poverty. They do not mean it,—but—what will you have? They are poor. Why do you not send the child to your mission? Your friend, Mr. Pratt—"

"The mission's no place for a child like that. There's too much promiscuous Mary Ann and Sairey Jane there. Those tough little cats would worry the life out of her. I had half a notion of getting Madame Pigault here to take care of her up stairs. Threes, is it? Now I've got to draw. What, with stray kids and bad cards at dominos, there's no rest for a quiet, respectable citizen. What do you think of bringing her here? It's a nice place up stairs, and I don't believe Madame Pigault will instill ideas of intemperance into her youthful mind."

"It would be well," assented the priest, after another pinch of snuff, and an interval of reflection. "But, perhaps you would do better to wait and see how the child gets along. It is only for a few weeks, I understand; and perhaps she will not be unhappy there. You must not forget that it will be much for Goubaud to have the money the Society will pay for her board. He is an honest, hard-working man, that Goubaud, and he scarcely makes enough in the year to pay his rent and live."

"I'll go round there in the morning, and see," said the Doctor, trying to dismiss the subject from his mind: "Ten! and that's domino, I believe. My cards weren't so unlucky, after all."

* * * * *

A strong wind from the northeast brought the faint sound of St. George's bells down to Washington Square, as the Doctor turned out of South Fifth avenue. It was as though Stuyvesant Square, snugly locked up for the night, sent a midnight message of reproach to the broader and more democratic ground whose hard walks knew no rest from echoing footsteps, in light or dark. Here the branches swayed and creaked in the night breeze, the gas-lamps flickered and winked; from time to time a tramp, or, from the foul streets below and to the eastward, something worse, in woman's shape, hurried across the bleak space, along the winding asphalt, walk-

ing over the Potter's Field of the past, on their way to Potter's Fields to be.

He had staid at the brasserie longer than was his wont, having this night a dull dread of the lonely hour before bed-time, to be spent in his green reps chair; of the dim anthracite fire, of the encompassing silence.

He heard his great key click in the lock of the outer door, and the sound was peculiarly depressing. He cut short a sigh, set his teeth, and smiled a grim smile as he toiled up the long stairs through the dead darkness. At the top of his own flight a cold, faint half-light filtered down from the skylight of the little old-fashioned dome that rose above the stairway, built through the story above. By this dull grayness he was able to see two bundles, a small one, and one comparatively larger, lying in front of his door. As he approached, the larger bundle stood up. The Doctor started in surprise.

"C'est moi," said the figure, which scarcely reached above the handle of the door.

"What?" demanded the Doctor.

"C'est moi," the figure repeated, in a tone of perfectly satisfying explanation; and as she tried to struggle out of the folds of an enormous water-proof cloak, the Doctor realized that it was Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot.

"C'est moi," she said.

CHAPTER V.

"WHAT is the matter?" asked the Doctor, falling back on the stock question which is the Anglo-Saxon's refuge in all cases of bewilderment, mystery or surprise.

"There is nothing is the matter," returned the girl, with composure.

"What do you want?"

"I want to enter."

She pointed to the door, her white finger just emerging from the folds of the waterproof. The Doctor unlocked his portal; she gathered up her small bundle and walked in. He followed her, leaving the door open. Within, the gas burned low, and as he stood with his hands in his pockets, stooping to look into her pale, small face, her meagre proportions seemed to him more meagre still. She looked up at him with an anxious question in her eyes, and he stared blankly at her.

"Well," he said, at last, "I don't want to seem inhospitable in any way, but if you'll kindly explain—"

"I cannot stay with those Goubaud," she said, with sudden agitation.

"Have they been treating you ill?" The Doctor's gray eyes began to light up.

"No—not that. They do not mean to be bad. But they are *different*. They are not—how you say it?—they are not like we others. La Goubaud, she say to me this morning: 'Go out. Play with the children. You get not your mother back, whether or no you are sulky. *Sois sage*. Play with the children.'" Her voice broke with an angry sob. "Me! Play with the children!" There was a woman's scorn in her tone. "Play my mother come back, perhaps? Make pretense she was not dead? She treats me in infant. I cannot bear it, monsieur. You comprehend? I cannot bear it."

The Doctor stood gazing at her in puzzled hopelessness.

"I run away to you. I pack up my things in this bag. The bag belong to la Goubaud. I take it back to-morrow. Alphonsine, she is *bête*, but she is good; she lend me her waterproof—see? so I run away to you."

She had got clear of the great garment by this time, and she shook it to the floor, and stood out, thinner and smaller than ever.

"But, my dear child," the Doctor began: "you can't stay here, you know—"

"Yes! let me stay here. You will not send me away?" She clasped her hands, together, nervously, as she stood in front of him, her

anxious, eager eyes searching his face, her mouth witching painfully. "You will let me stay, monsieur. It is a so short time! And I shall die *there*"—with a little shudder: "I tell you, *I die* there. You let me stay. I make myself useful. I know much, monsieur; I cook, I keep the place clean, I sew your clothes. I do all that for my parents, when they have been alive. I take care of you when you are sick. I am good nurse—very good nurse. You are sick sometimes, eh?"

She made the inquiry with painful eagerness. He smiled as he slowly shook his head; and her face fell.

"I am sorry," she said, simply; and then she beamed with sudden hope.

"I cook for you. You do not know how good I cook. Alphonsine, she tell me you live all alone; maybe you want a cook. Very well. I be your cook. Yes, I am small, I know; but you see I know how to cook—I promise you. I make you *omelette aux confitures*, same I used to make for my father. You ever eat *omelette aux confitures?*"

The Doctor pulled himself together.

"Look here," he said; "I want to have a talk with you."

"No!" she cried, imperatively, seized with a quick mistrust, "I do not want that you have a talk with me. You mean to tell me to go back to la Goubaud, eh?"

"No, I don't."

"You let me stay here—with you?" she began again, coaxingly, with wide, brightening eyes. "Just a little time—to try? If I am not good, you send me back."

The Doctor gave vent to a husky exclamation that sounded like profanity.

"Come here," he said, holding out his hands.

"No," she insisted: "you tell me what you do!"

He turned and shut the door, and the child promptly walked up to him and placed two cold hands in his. He led her to the arm-chair, and sat down and made her stand in front of him, while he inspected her with curious interest. Her eyes were old; but her face, in spite of its thinness and pallor, had a certain almost babyish prettiness about it, sensitive and delicate. There was enough of the mother's look in it to give promise of greater beauty. And through all her grief and anxiety, he could see traces of an expression of sweet, winsome, childish wilfulness, which suggested the innocent and instinctive coquetry of a kitten. Her hair, thick, dark, soft and wavy—the mother's hair—hung heavily around her face and down her back, and against it he saw her sallow, thin neck, with its tense cords. A scanty ruffle of cheap lace hung loosely about her throat; and he noticed her narrow chest, made yet narrower by the pleats of

her shabby black frock. He looked hard at her, and she looked hard at him, and he saw that she was unmistakably in earnest.

"You shan't go back to Goubaud's, I promise you that," he said at last: "and you shan't go anywhere where you don't want to go. But as for staying here—well, I don't think that can be managed. I'm a young bachelor, you see, and I'm afraid it wouldn't be—proper."

She knit her brows.

"I did not think of that. But then, you are not young. You are not old, old—but you are not young." Then, with a sudden illumination: "But if I am your cook, it is *proper*. A cook —that is *convenable*, monsieur."

"But I have a cook. At least,"—he corrected himself,—"she's a kind of a cook."

"She cooks bad? Very bad?"

"I guess that's about the size of it."

"Well!" she solved the problem with a definitive shrug of her shoulders, "send her away. Take me. You do not believe I can cook? I cook you a supper—*now!*"

"I haven't the slightest doubt of your powers as a cook," laughed the Doctor: "but if I discharge Luise, what am I going to do when you leave me? You'll have to go to your uncle in a few weeks."

She settled that question with the same promptitude and ease.

"I don't go to my uncle, then. I don't care. It is all the same. I stay here with you."

"But your uncle will have something to say about that."

"He don't care, either, I guess. If he take me, I cost him money. He don't like that people cost him money. He let me stay here if you say so."

"Well," said the Doctor, "we'll see about it. I don't doubt that I shall be satisfied with your cooking; but perhaps you won't like the place yourself."

She shook her head wisely.

"That is all right. I like it. Then I stay?"

"You've got to stay for to-night, sure. I shouldn't know what to do with you, at this hour. And now I don't know where to put you."

"I go in the cook's room."

The Doctor laughed aloud.

"I guess not. There's no bed there, and it's colder than seventeen north poles stood on end. You'd freeze to death there; and you're cold enough already. Here, sit down here and warm yourself while I see where to stow you."

He got up and slipped the child into his place. Then he stirred the fire into life, and put her feet on the fender, first taking off her shoes, which were worn to such an extent that they were both picturesque and pathetic.

"Now you stay there and warm yourself, and I'll see about quarters. Great Scott!" he said, as he held up the shoes, "if you're going to be my cook you've got to get a new pair of those things, for the credit of the establishment."

If he had not been bending down when he removed her shoes, he would have seen that she colored painfully. He saw the color deepening now, and he wished he had not spoken. "Well," he went on, rather awkwardly, "I don't suppose you could have known that I made it a point to be particular about my cook's shoes—just a sort of a way I have. Now, let's see. I guess I can make you comfortable for the night, somehow or other. This is your traveling-bag?" he asked, lifting the blue ticking sack that she had brought with her. "Well, when I was down South, the boys called me 'Potato-bag Peters,' one time, because I had to tote my traps around in an old potato-sack. Just as good, you know, as a fancy satchel, and holds a lot more. Have you got your what-you-may-call-'em in here?"

"My—?"

"Your—ah—your night things, whatever they are," he explained, hastily and uncomfortably.

The red on the child's face mounted to the roots of her hair.

"N—n—" she began, and then finished resolutely—"Yes!"

He felt himself rebuked, and he grew nearly as

red as the forlorn, poverty-stricken waif in his easy chair. It was ridiculous for a veteran of the Doctor's age to flush up like a school-girl; but he did it now and then, and was always ashamed of it.

He moved about in silence for a minute or two, looking for extra bed-clothes to put on the big horse-hair sofa in the corner—the one relic of the Oneida homestead which he possessed. From the depths of a dark closet his guest heard him, after a while, calling down the vengeance of heaven upon the head of Luise; but in the end he found the mislaid drapery, and emerged with his burden. The child leaped to her feet, and, after one rueful glance at the two pink toes that peeped from her black stockings, pattered across the floor to him, and took the bed-clothes in charge as he dropped them on the floor.

"It is for *me*," she said, with feminine superiority: "you do not know how."

He had to stand aside, even his assistance scorned, as she rapidly and neatly made up a bed on the sofa. Her easy adaptation of the means to the end gave the impression of a thorough acquaintance with the exigencies of poverty in the matter of "shake-downs."

It was all done before the Doctor could have got one sheet stretched evenly, and then she gave the completed work the two little pats and the smoothing stroke with which the true woman

always polishes off her bed-making. She turned to the Doctor, and he nodded approbation.

"Now, young woman," he inquired, beginning to feel a certain familiarity with his new acquaintance, "do you suppose you could eat some crackers and cheese before you turn in?"

Again a hint of painful color crept into her wan face; but this time she looked him in the eye, and said that she could eat some crackers and cheese.

She did eat some crackers and cheese—a great many crackers and a great deal of cheese, in a way that showed that she was hungry. The Doctor went up-stairs in the dark, and found some milk in the ice-box—Luise had never been able to see any good reason why milk should be fresh, when freshness involved going out in the early morning and getting a new supply—and he brought it down, and his guest made quite a fair supper, sitting perched up in the big green reps chair, with her feet to the fire, the bare toes that protruded from the black stockings occasionally drawing themselves up in modest consciousness of their unconventional nudity.

But in the middle of it all she broke down, and choked on a drink of milk, and burst into a passion of tears, crying: "O ma mère, ma mère—O ma pauvre petite mère!" The Doctor went to her side, and she threw her arms about him, but instantly pushed him away, and fumbled for her

pocket, and found a poor little ball of a handkerchief, with which she mopped up her tears. Her breast heaved still, and her breath was tremulous; but she tried to take up her talk where she had left it. She had been telling him about her abilities as a cook, and she endeavored to go on and enlighten him about a certain François in a hotel at Biarritz, who had taught her to make a marvelous *tisane* for the sick. She had lost the thread of her narrative, however, and the Doctor felt it incumbent upon him to keep up his end of the conversation.

So he told her about some amateur cooking he had done in war-times—he was not in the habit of talking of war-times; but he was short of a subject—and he dilated on his enjoyment of a certain sandwich or stratified structure of crackers, pork, molasses and smoked beef, until her feminine horror at the unholy fare filled her young mind to the exclusion of deeper emotions.

Then he suggested that it was time to go to bed, and he made a move to carry her bag into his room. But she would not hear of the arrangement. Her protest was vehement, decided, and in the end it was successful. She would sleep on the sofa, and the Doctor should sleep in his own bed. And when the argument closed, the Doctor felt himself dismissed from the room. She did not express herself in words; but there was in her manner a distinct feminine intimation

that his further lingering would be in bad taste. Conquered and embarrassed, he retreated.

But a couple of hours later he got up, slipped into his old red-flannel dressing-gown, and stole into the sitting-room to see if his charge was asleep. He only went near enough to the couch to hear her regular, soft breathing, and then he tip-toed back, turning hurriedly into his own room, as though he felt that his presence profaned the innocent maiden slumber that was a strange new thing under his roof.

* * * * *

He woke the next morning with a glad, foolishly, expectant feeling which he could not have explained to himself. He remembered, though, a similar sensation when the winter dawn looked into his narrow attic room, in the days of his boyhood, and reminded him that singing-school was to be held that night, and that he should probably see Alida Jansen home.

Ten minutes later, as he was taking his morning dip in the bath-room at the rear of the hall, he heard a sound of violent contention coming from the regions above. He paused knee-deep in the water and listened. One voice was unquestionably that of Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. The other was what the voice of Luise might be, raised to the n^{th} of dissonance by extreme rage. He had stepped softly past the closed door of his sitting-room, as he went to

his bath, for fear of waking the sleeping child; but it seemed that the child was not sleeping. He huddled on some clothes and hurried up stairs, appearing in the kitchen in his shirt-sleeves, to act as mediator in a combat that was growing fiercer each moment.

The small usurper was in position of vantage, her back to the range, her feet wide apart, planted firmly on the hearthstone, her left hand grasping a frying-pan, while her right gesticulated freely. She was talking with a fiery volubility and a command of language—such language as it was—that for the moment had silenced old Luise.

"Imbécile of a German—bête! idiot! va! If I knew to use your language for the beasts, I would tell you what you are. Go, I tell you! Nobody want you here. You are dis-s-s-charged! You have no ears then, you insane, that you stand there and mock yourself of me? Go, then! get yourself out, or I forget myself—j' te dirai des injures, you hear me! You are no more cook—I am cook—" here she caught sight of the Doctor. "Tell her she is no more cook. She will not go. Tell her she shall go. Tell her in her ac-cur-sed tongue!"

"Ah!" gasped the Doctor, himself appalled by this vigor of utterance, and too much taken aback to remember that *maudite* gains strength when translated by "accursed."

"Am I not your cook, eh? You engage me

last night, eh! Then tell her that she shall go. Imbécile "— this triumphantly to Luise—" tu vas voir."

The light of a great and beautiful possibility broke upon the Doctor's mind. Here was his chance, his heaven-sent chance, of getting rid of Luise forever. It would be flying in the face of Providence to neglect it. He chastened a broad grin to a pleasantly humorous smile, and said placidly:

"Yes, that's so. Sorry for this little misunderstanding; but it's a fact, Luise. This young lady—I mean, this is my new cook. I ought to have told you before that I was thinking of changing; but she arrived, rather unexpectedly, and—"

"Dot chi-yilt?" Luise shrieked.

"That young woman, yes. Of course, I ought to have given you a month's warning; but I guess we can make it even with a month's cash —how'll that do? Sorry to lose you, Luise; but the fact is, I've come to the conclusion that I like younger cooking—see? Suppose you call on me to-night, and I'll settle accounts with you? We'll make it all satisfactory, somehow, Luise," he finished, feeling his heart begin to fail him.

The successful combatant in front of the fire gave her frying-pan an airy twirl of victory, and set it down on the stove with a slam. "N-i, ni,"

she said: "c'est fini!" and she folded her hands on her apron, waiting for her rival to depart.

Luise stood one stricken moment speechless, and then she turned and cluttered to the door. As she grasped the post and swung herself out, she turned to level a threatening finger at the Doctor.

"I kess you goin' crazy!" she hissed, and she disappeared.

Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot gazed at the Doctor, the flush of indignation fading from her cheeks. She bobbed her small head significantly and closed one eye in the wink of fellowship.

"Good," she said: "no more Luise!"

"But how about my breakfast?" demanded the Doctor.

"Your breakfast," she replied, looking at the clock: "it will be ready in fifteen minutes—*if* you go down stairs," she added, severely. "You go down stairs, you put on your coat, you read your *journal*—you brush your hair, perhaps"—with a quick glance at the top of his head—"and I come with the breakfast before you are ready."

He departed submissively and finished his dressing. The fifteen minutes had spread out to twenty, and he was just taking down his pipe to stay his stomach with nicotine, when he heard a fumbling at the door-knob. He put the pipe away guiltily, and opened to his new cook, who

was nearly hidden behind the loaded breakfast-tray.

She permitted him to set it on the floor, and then she made him stand aside while she set the table. When the board was spread, he gravely invited her to a seat, and, after a moment's hesitation, in which she glanced with hungry eyes at the work of her hands, she graciously accepted, and, climbing into a chair opposite her host, she named over the edibles, not as Luise had of old; but with the gusto of an artist.

She had not boasted vainly. There was an omelette, golden, light and tender; there were a few bits of crisp bacon; there was a bunch of radishes coyly tucked in a napkin folded to simulate a rose; there was a little pile of anchovy toast, and there was a pot of coffee, clear and strong, such as the Doctor had not tasted in many a morning.

"I kept you waiting a little," she said, apologetically: "and it is not all as I would like; but it is not my fault. That Luise, she is—how you say?—untidy. She puts the things allwheres and nowheres."

The Doctor assured her that he was perfectly satisfied, and he proved it by his attention to the repast. But as he ate, it slowly dawned on his man's mind that the delicacies before him were not usually among the provisions of the uninventive Luise.

"Where did you get these—these extras?" he inquired, indicating them with a comprehensive sweep of his hand.

"I got up and went out and got them before you were awake," she answered, proudly: "I got them at Breitenbach, the grocery around the corner."

"But I haven't an account there!" he said, in dismay.

"No, I know. But I did not know what was your place, and they knew you there. They would not believe me that I came from you, and they would send a German boy with me back, but when he came here, he has seen that it was all right, and he has left the things. You can pay, can you not? he will give credit."

The Doctor suppressed his comments on this revelation. "And, that?" he further inquired, pointing to the butter-dish. It was ingeniously swaddled in a napkin, and from one corner of the napkin peeped a large carnation-pink. She blushed a little, and smiled knowingly. "Oh, that," she said; "I got that from the boy. He had it in his button-hole; so I was very nice with him, and I asked him for it, and he has given it to me. One flower, even," she explained; "it is so good on the table. It gives the appetite."

CHAPTER VI.

"I THINK," said the Doctor, an hour later, when he had read his paper and meditated over his pipe, while his new aid washed the breakfast-things, and made his bed and dusted the rooms, "I rather think that I'll do the marketing while you're in charge of the establishment. You can tell me what you want, and I'll get it. It's more in my line, anyway, and it strikes me that—that I'm a little more up to the exigencies of the situation."

This last phrase evidently exerted on his hearer's mind the influence of the mysterious and incomprehensible. She gave it deliberate consideration, and finally felt herself safe in assenting. Perhaps, she admitted, it would be better.

They proceeded to lay out a dinner, which impressed the Doctor as being of dangerously large proportions. It began with bouillon, went on with fried smelts, rose to the height of a cutlet, and passed to coffee and cheese, through an *omelette soufflé*. The plan also involved the introduction of various vegetables.

It was arranged that the Doctor was not to be

home to luncheon, whereat the new cook was pleased. She acknowledged that if there was one weak spot in her culinary education, it was in the matter of luncheon. She kindly explained that the French system of late breakfasting rendered luncheon unnecessary, and she seemed disposed to dwell on the superiority of that plan until she found her American friend hopelessly unresponsive.

His list having been made out, the Doctor took M. Goubaud's sack and Alphonsine's waterproof, and set out. He stopped at Breitenbach's to settle his bill and dash the hopes of Breitenbach, who would have been more than glad to write Dr. Peters's name on his books. He saw Mme. Goubaud, who grumbled sourly at the flight of her boarder, even after the Doctor had paid the price of three weeks' board for Miss Talbot, out of his own pocket. He also found means of surreptitiously returning her cloak to Alphonsine, with a little cash compensation for her kindness to the child. And, when all this was done, he went off to see his friend at the rooms of the Benevolent Society.

The little secretary took a gloomy view of the young lady's contumacy. He did not see how the Society could countenance such independent action on the part of one of its wards. It was irregular and improper, and he thoroughly disapproved of it.

"We've got to do something with her, all the same, Peloubet," said the Doctor. "She can't stay with me, and she won't stay at Goubaud's, and she oughtn't to."

"W'y can she not stay wiz you?" inquired Peloubet, in extravagant protest: "you 'ave a grand apar-r-rtment—you ar-r-r so reech you don' know w'at to do wiz your monnee—w'y can she not stay wiz you?"

"Great Scott, Peloubet—I can't have a child in my place, there—especially a child of that peculiar sex."

"Bah! It is but two—t'ree wicks. She is your niece; she is come to mek you a visit. You ar-r-r old enough to be an uncle, eh?"

"I'm old enough to be most anything, I suppose," returned the Doctor, with a rather grim smile; "but I'm not the uncle of the whole Benevolent Society. There's no two ways about it. I got you into this scrape, and I'll take whatever trouble there is to be taken; but I've got to find some decent woman to look after the child, and it must be done with the sanction of the Society. It's all the same to you to whom you pay her board. It must be done, and it'll have to be done right off. If that infant settles herself down in my quarters much more firmly, I shan't be able to get her out with an ox-chain."

"Bot she mos' go w'ere we send her," said the Secretary.

"But she won't, if she don't feel like it."

"You mos' *mek* her go."

"Well, I don't know that I should want to make her go, if she stayed any longer," said the Doctor, half to himself. Then he got up to depart.

"All right, Peloubet, I'll hunt around and find a place for her, and then I'll report to you, and if it's satisfactory, we'll transfer the young woman after dinner. I expect she'll break her heart if she isn't allowed to cook that dinner." He had told the Secretary of the child's fancy that she could be the cook in his bachelor establishment.

Dr. Peters spent the rest of the daylight in a twofold search—looking for a temporary home for his charge, and also for a cook for himself. Mme. Pigault finally helped him out of both of his difficulties. Her sister, in Harlem, would take the child to board—her sister was a milliner, and the place would be better for the little one than here where there were so many men forever coming and going—nice, respectable men they were; but, *enfin*, men. And she knew of a cook, did Mme. Pigault, a certain Elise, a French Alsatian, who was all that there was of most perfect in the way of a cook.

These things being off his mind, the Doctor went home. Lodoiska Agnes looked down on him from the top of the kitchen stairway, and told him that dinner would be ready at six, and that she had caught a mouse in the trap, and had

let him go again. It was only five, so he took off his coat and went to filing away in his work-room, where a little light still lingered. It was the large back-room, looking out on two vacant lots, that stretched through to Third Street. In the summer time there was no pleasanter room in all that quarter; for the yards were green and bright, and a beautiful tree stood in one of them, spreading and flourishing as fairly as if it had been miles out in the country, and serving as something of a screen between the house and the noise and ugliness of the newly-built elevated railroad. But the room itself was bare and unfurnished, save for the work-bench and racks that held the odds and ends of models and castings. And the outlook to-day was not over cheerful, for the tree was stripped of its leaves, and the trains went crashing by, their lighted windows glaring in the twilight.

He had lit the gas, and was still filing away and whistling to himself, when his cook came in. She had been setting the table in the sitting-room, and she paid him a brief visit to tell him that it was time to get ready for his dinner.

She inquired into the nature of his labors, perching herself on the largest casting that stood against the wall. He told her what he was doing; and she instantly got off the casting, and expressed her disapprobation.

Why did he wish to make a cannon, to kill

people? It was cruel; it was not *gentil.* She would not do like that. She did not like it.

Dr. Peters explained that cannons were useful in time of war, when one's country was attacked; but she was not satisfied. Yes, she knew all about that. The Prussians, who, she incidently remarked, were hogs, had attacked France. She did not remember it; it was many years ago, and she was very little then; but she had been told about it, and she had seen the mischief they had done. But, herself, she thought that the French were as bad as the Prussians. They had cannons, too, and they had used them, although they must have known that it would set fire to their houses and knock down the trees and ruin everything. She did not like cannons at all. She had seen them fired, not to kill people, of course; but just to pass the time. The smoke and the flame were very pretty; but the noise was not good. If they could have the smoke and the flame without the noise—well! But for killing people—it had not the common sense. Why could not he make something else?

What should he make? the Doctor asked her. He was ready to invent anything she desired; he didn't care particularly about cannons. What should it be? She pondered awhile, and then suggested "something to eat."

This recalling her to her duties, she took herself off upstairs; and the Doctor made his

simple toilet in preparation for dinner. He saw, when he entered the sitting-room, that places were set for two, from which he concluded that his new domestic was either enough of a democrat, or enough of an aristocrat, to see no impropriety in dining with her employer.

She came down, presently, bearing the soup-tureen, which she placed in front of the head of the house. She swung herself into her chair opposite him, and began a voluble discourse on the demerits of the departed Luise, as shown in the deplorable condition of the kitchen and pantry. The Doctor ladled out the bouillon, gave the culinary artist her plate, and then stared hard at his own, as he filled it. He took a spoonful and elevated it for closer examination. It was of a fine straw-color, and the pattern on the bottom of the plate shone through in undimmed blueness. To the taste the broth suggested faintly the flavor of beef-tea; but it gave no hint of sustenance.

The monologue on the sins of Luise went on across the table; but it was less fluent, and there were awkward, conscious breaks in it. The face bent over the hot, thin decoction changed from red to white and back to red again. The Doctor said nothing; being painfully at a loss. Finally the small face was raised, and she addressed him with a brave assumption of ease, while a tear glistened in each eye.

"This bouillon is not good, I don't think. You find it thin, do you not?"

"Well," hazarded the Doctor, "it's a little that way, seems to me."

"Never mind. We will not eat it. I will take it away. The next time I will make it more strong."

She slipped to the ground, and, taking the plate from him, gathered up her own and the soup-tureen, and hurried from the room with them, clearly desirous of getting them out of sight as soon as possible. When she returned she brought the smelts. There was a perceptible decrease of confidence in her manner; but she became herself again when it proved that the smelts were good beyond cavil. They were well fried; they lay in a clean napkin, and there was a sprig of parsley so ingeniously tucked into each gaping mouth that it looked like a tiny green nosegay, of which, and himself to boot, the smelt was making general tender.

The smelts having established their claim to respect, it was with unconcealed pride that the cook marched upstairs to get the veal cutlet. The maintenance of her social as well as her domestic functions caused long waits between the courses, but although it was ten minutes before her reappearance, both she and the Doctor felt that the success of the smelts justified her in expecting the indulgence to be accorded to an artist.

The cutlet was brown and pleasing to the eye. A paper rose grew from the island of bone in the middle. Lodoiska Agnes called her host's attention to it, and described the process of making paper roses. Then the Doctor, his eyes politely fixed on the person speaking to him, cut into the cutlet. There was a courteous smile of divided interest on his face, but it vanished as an agonized contortion swept over the child's features, and a cry of pain and horror came from her quivering lips. He glanced down where she was looking, at his knife and fork. He thought that he must have been guilty of some hideous slip, and he half-expected to see a severed finger lying in the platter. But even as he looked, the girl, with a bitter cry of shame and grief, spread out her little hands, trying to hide the dish from his sight. "No, no!" she wailed: "you shall not see it! I will not that you shall see it!"

He could not help himself; a smile came on his face. The incision had disclosed the inner depths of the cutlet. The bread-crumb crust was browned; but below was only the hideous, livid, raw pink of uncooked meat.

There was nothing but child left in her now. In her utter humiliation and despair, she let him take her up in his arms and kiss and console and caress her after a fatherly fashion. She hid her face on his shoulder, hanging to him by the lapels of his coat, and she sobbed and moaned,

and brokenly bewailed her failure, and then cried aloud for her father and her mother.

He let her have it out, and when the spasmodic violence of her distress had abated, he made her sit up on his knee and listen to his assurances that it was all right; that they could make a very good dinner without the cutlet; that he didn't mind it in the least, if she didn't. He pressed his lips to her hot cheek, where the salt tears trickled down even while a faint, dim gleam of hope once more began to dawn in her eyes. He smoothed her hair, and she dried her tears with his faded silk handkerchief, and after a bit they organized a joint expedition to the kitchen, where the cutlet was stowed away under the sink, and where they made coffee, with which and the crackers and cheese, they descended to the sitting-room. The *omelette soufflé* was postponed to another occasion; and they got on very well without it, and were surprised to find how far crackers and cheese could go as a substitute for a dinner.

When it was all finished, and the table was cleared off, she came readily to sit on his lap as he smoked his pipe. Here she fell into a brown study, and, after a couple of minutes of silence she suddenly turned to him, put her arms about his neck, and kissed him. It was an offering so deliberate, frank and sweetly declarative of affection that the Doctor blushed. She was chary

of her kisses, he afterward found out; but when she gave them, she meant them.

But she was quite willing now to be kissed, and she accepted and even invited petting with the most childlike simplicity. Like the Widow Malone, she seemed to feel that submission to an initial aggression involved and demanded full surrender. Her mature reserve had banished with the downfall of her dignity; and she put her head in the hollow of his shoulder and nestled up to him as though she were six instead of twelve.

All the time she chattered, telling him, in a rambling, desultory way, the story of her life. And a queer story of genteel tramphood it was, full of details of curious shifts of poverty, accounts of strange lodgings and stranger companionships, tales of friendly cooks and waiters and odd vagabonds of the father's profession, and tales of unfriendly landlords and hard-hearted purveyors of provisions.

Incoherent as was her recital—and she stopped often to cry quietly over her lost father and mother—it was deeply interesting to the Doctor. It gave him pictures of a life of which he knew little, and it made comprehensible to him the odd mental and moral development of this little being who could not fairly be classed either with children or with women.

The clock struck nine—his usual hour for

going to Pigault's; but he thought he would wait awhile to-night, until it should be time for the child to go to bed. Ten o'clock came, and the little one was still lying in his arms, with her head on his shoulder, and they were talking like old friends. For the time being, her reminiscences had come to an end, and she was catechizing him. She wanted to know where *he* had been, and what *he* had done, and he tried to tell her, with all the awkwardness of a man who has made it a rule in life not to talk about himself. He told her of the old homestead in the north of the state, of his stern, precise, formal father, Doctor Peters, the great man of their little town; of his mother, what little he remembered of her; of his simple, uneventful, meagre boyhood; of his brief career as a student of medicine, and then he came to the War.

Volunteer though he had been, he was a thorough-going old soldier in certain things; and it was not easy for him to begin to talk about the War. But when he did begin, he forgot himself, and now he told story after story, to which the child on his lap listened in fascinated absorption. They were only such stories of the camp and field as any veteran of the great war could tell; but they had that charm which lies in every soldier's story, and his hearer forgot her dislike of cannons and her feminine objections to the waste of human life in listening to him.

He stopped suddenly, ashamed of his enthusiastic freedom of speech. It was past eleven o'clock. He told Lodoiska Agnes that she ought to be in bed. She looked somewhat surprised; but made no remonstrance.

Sliding down from his knee, she stood a moment in meditation, and then asked:

"What is it that you want for breakfast?"

Before she had finished the question, the tears of shame came into her eyes. He gathered her up again, and told her that he would like nothing better than another breakfast just such as she had given him that morning. He had not had such a breakfast in many years, he declared, with the convincing fervor of truth, and he did not see how it could be improved upon.

"I cannot cook for you," she murmured, sadly; "I do not cook so good as I have thought I could cook."

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you what it is. I've been thinking about this cooking business, and I think I see what we've got to do. You're going away after a while, you know"—she slipped a finger into his button-hole, and he stroked the small hand as it hung there—"and I shall have to get a cook who'll stay here. See? Now you know all about cooking—though of course you aren't just ready to take hold of a bachelor establishment and do all the work yourself—'twasn't to be expected of you. So I thought

I'd engage a cook—just a plain, common cook, and you could kind of hang around and break her in—oversee her and—and—*boss* her. You'd be the housekeeper, as it were—head of the establishment, and all that. I think it's rather more in your line. And then you could take your meals with me, quiet and comfortable. What do you think of the scheme?"

"Oh, yes," she cried, her eyes dilating, "that would be good."

"Yes," he went on, "I've engaged the cook, and she's coming to-morrow, and you can take right hold and—"

He stopped short. What was he doing? This was a pretty way to prepare her for her transfer to the milliner's in Harlem. He had been voicing a wild fancy, and he had not realized how far he was going. She saw his embarrassment.

"Why do you stop? Go on."

"Well," he began, feebly, "I was just thinking—"

"What?"

"Well—you mightn't like the place."

"Oh, yes," she said with decision: "I will like it. I would like to stay with you. I like you better than any one—except—except—"

He drew her closer to him, in token of understanding; but he did not attempt to account to himself for a certain internal wincing that he felt at the clause of limitation. The

human animal is naturally and healthily a jealous animal.

"It is then omelette and anchovy toast?" she concluded, considering the question settled. "And you like the radish always, eh?"

He felt pitifully weak as he assented, promising himself that to-morrow he would tell her that she must go away.

"Good-night," he said, as he rose. She frankly lifted up her mouth to be kissed, and as he bent over her he wished in his soul that he had done his duty and had it over. He felt almost like a traitor as he touched her lips, thinking of what he was hiding from her.

When he was in his own room, he sat down on the edge of his bed and pondered. What was going to happen to-morrow, when he told her that she must leave him? She evidently had no idea of anything of the sort. Even the going to Europe was to her something remote, not worthy of present consideration. His conscience troubled him. He had done wrong in letting her tie herself up to him and to this temporary home. What would she think of him when he sent her up to the milliner's shop in Harlem? And what would she think of the milliner's shop? He had once seen Mme. Pigault's sister —a busy, fussy, common-place little Frenchwoman; not at all like good Mme. Pigault. She was only a modified, improved and prosperous

Mme. Goubaud. He felt instinctively that the child would not like her.

Well, it was of no use, his sitting there and thinking it over. The thing must be done to-morrow, and another time he would be more careful. But, he reflected, in mingled relief and regret, he was not likely another time to encounter another Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot.

He rose, and was about to begin undressing, when he noticed that his dressing-gown was missing. It always hung at the foot of the bed; but he remembered that he had left it in the bath-room that morning when he went up to arbitrate the quarrel between his two cooks, and that he had subsequently seen it in the sitting-room, where Lodoiska Agnes had draped it picturesquely over the end of the sofa.

He tapped at the door. There was no answer, and he opened it softly and slipped in. The gas was still burning, and there, before the fire, the child sat in his big arm-chair, toasting her bare feet. She was wrapped in the red dressing-gown, which stood out in hideous discord with the green reps.

"Well, I'll be—blest!" exclaimed the Doctor; "aren't you in bed yet?"

Startled, she jumped down and faced him, huddling the too ample garment about her in a way that suggested a desire to conceal some more intimate deficiencies of attire.

"No," she said, "I am not fatigued. I go to bed always—twelve, one o'clock sometimes."

"Not here you don't," the Doctor corrected her vigorously: "if you want to stay here, you've got to turn in when the drum beats. Pile right into bed, young woman, and leave that article of clothing where I can get at it, or I'll have to tie a blanket around me to get to my bath in the morning."

She turned obediently to the couch, which she had already prepared for the night.

"All right. You come back in two seconds, you find it there, on the chair."

She waited for him to go, but he lingered in a new perplexity.

"I say," he commenced, hesitatingly, "aren't you in the habit—I suppose you are—but—don't you generally say something before you go to bed?"

"Say what?"

"Why, say a prayer, or something. Most people do it—when they ain't grown up," the spirit of truth compelled him to add.

She opened her eyes, and shook her head.

"No—not me—never."

"Didn't your mother teach you to say your prayers?"

She shook her head again, bewildered.

"No."

He felt dimly that a moral responsibility de-

volved upon him, and that he was not quite up to it, at the moment. He turned away in uncomfortable irresolution. She called him back.

"You want me to say prayers?" she asked.

"Why—yes. Seems to me it would be better."

"All right, if you want."

And in an instant she had dropped on her knees, the great red dressing-gown puffing out around her, and before the Doctor could quite grasp the situation, she had rattled through an "Ave Maria, gratia plena." Then, still on her knees, she looked up at him and calmly inquired, "How many?"

"That's enough," said the Doctor, and returned to his own room. "Maybe it's too much," he reflected. He certainly had no idea of taking her religious training in hand; but when he fell asleep, a little later, his brain was drowsily working to reconstruct the exact wording of a simple formula of his childhood, which had somehow slipped his memory in the course of years, and which began:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep;
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

Yes, he had actually forgotten the third line. He knew the Ave Maria better. He had heard it oftener in sick-rooms and hospitals. Oneida County was a long way from the French quarter of New York.

CHAPTER VII.

PELOUBET was more discouraging than ever when Dr. Peters informed him that he proposed to make the Talbot child his guest until her relatives sent for her. The Doctor had come to this decision while smoking his after-breakfast pipe. He had debated the question within himself all night, and had satisfied himself a dozen times over that there was nothing to do but to order Lodoiska Agnes to put herself in charge of the milliner. He was considering ways and means of avoiding or mitigating the necessarily consequent "scene," when it suddenly dawned upon his mind that he had not the slightest intention of doing anything of the sort; and, greatly relieved in spirit, he marched off to Peloubet to tell him so.

Peloubet was really doubtful this time. He had made the suggestion the day before, but it was only in a jocular way—just as he had talked about the Doctor's vast wealth. This serious acceptance of the idea staggered him. He was a good, sensible, liberal-minded man, but he was a Frenchman, and he had a Frenchman's ideas

and prejudices. The Frenchman in him had a struggle with reason and experience before he gave his grave and dubious consent. After all, though, there was nothing to be said against the proposition. Dr. Peters could have qualified in any court as a proper guardian for the child—and it was a saving to the Society. "You will ripport ev-ver-y wick, eh?" he said: "Eet is a fo'malitee—jos' write me a line—I put it on ze file."

The temporary guardian of Lodoiska Agnes felt an almost boyish light-heartedness as he trudged from butcher to baker, and from baker to grocer, that cold, sharp, clear morning, executing domestic commissions. He felt that he was having fun; that he was going to have fun. Perhaps he felt also that he had not behaved exactly like a rational, sober, sensible man, forty years old; but the boy in him rather enjoyed its own assertion of independence. He was not at all sure that he didn't want to run away from the man of forty, and forget his dull adult rule.

He was at home by one o'clock, with his arms full of bundles, and when he reached his hallway, he whistled "Boots and Saddles" up the kitchen stairs. There was no reply, and then he remembered that he had a parcel to stow away in his own room. He put it on the upper shelf of the closet, and went up stairs after Lodoiska Agnes. She was not in the kitchen. "Here! young

woman!" he called, and glanced vainly into the pantry. He waited for the answer that did not come, and then he looked in the servant's room, in front. There was no trace of the small housekeeper. He ran down stairs and glanced through the rooms. She was not there. He looked hastily in every corner, but she was not there. Up stairs again, he called her, and got no answer. "Here! young one!—you—Lo-do-is-ka!" he cried. Perhaps she had gone out on some errand. But just then he remembered that her outer garments, which were a jacket and a little black straw hat, were still at Mme. Goubaud's. They had been hanging in the old woman's room when she took her flight, and Mme. Goubaud had promised him to send them around, and had not kept her promise. He knew that, for Alphonsine had come out to thank him as he passed through Houston Street that afternoon, and she had bewailed her mistress's bad faith. A sick feeling came over him. He looked around to see if a window was open. What a fool he was! Probably the child had gone down stairs to scrape acquaintance with the tenants of the lower kitchens. Yes, that was it. She was lonely, and she had gone down stairs. He would descend and see. Then came the thought that he might not find her there, and he cast one more hopeless glance into the depths of the pantry.

When Dr. Peters had first undertaken to imitate, on the top floor of a New York lodging-house, the New Netherlands homestead kitchen of his boyhood, he had had a vivid memory of his mother's pickle-jar. That memory represented it as a stoneware crock of colossal size. He pictured it to incredulous dealers as being about a yard in diameter. They one and all assured him that no such crock had ever been known in the New York market. He expressed his unflattering opinion of the New York market, and continued his search. Finally, an enterprising man had one made for him. It came, about a year after his plan of housekeeping had faded into an unsubstantial dream. It was twenty-four inches across the top, and stood nearly three feet high. He then perceived that the family of a Biblical patriarch could not have needed such a pickle-jar. And he remembered also that he had never cared much for pickles. He paid the bill, and he put the crock on its side, in a corner of the pantry's lowest shelf. There it lay, year after year, doomed to be forever pickle-less.

There it lay now, with Lodoiska Agnes in it. She was seated on a stool, her head and shoulders and arms within the vast hollow of that crock. The Doctor, his heart suddenly light once more, went to her and gently pulled her out. She had been crying; her face was wet with tears and her hair was wildly "mussed."

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Maman," she replied, simply.

She cried a little more on his shoulder, and consented to be comforted. "I was alone," she said, "and I wanted to be in the night."

He lavished caresses upon her with a warmth that she did not quite understand, and that was something of a revelation to the Doctor himself. He told her eagerly how the Benevolent Society had consented to let her stay with him until her uncle should want her. She listened, but with no great interest. She had never contemplated any other order of things. He told her more about Élise, who was coming that afternoon. He had stopped at Mme. Pigault's to get the bundle now in his room; but he said nothing about that.

Soon they were chatting cheerfully over their housekeeping schemes. He made a diversion to tell her how frightened he had been when he could not find her; and he remembered how he had struggled with her polysyllabic first name.

"By the way," he said, "what am I going to call you?"

"My name? Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. It is long; but it is nice, don't you think?"

"Yes, I know;" and he laughed: "it's a nice name; but it won't do for family use. 'Lodoiska' is too long, and I don't know what to call it for

short, and you don't seem to me to be 'Agnes,' somehow; and I can't call you either of the Hunts."

"'Lodoiska' is a nice name," she observed, gravely.

"Yes, but it's altogether too much of a name for a little midget like you."

"What is a midget?" she inquired.

"Why—" he hesitated: "a midget—a midget is a little thing like you."

She was standing before him as he leaned against the table, holding her hands. She certainly was very small.

"Why," he went on; "you're not even a midget—you're a midge."

"'Midge,'" she said, giving the word a curiously pretty little French turn, "'Midge' is a nice name."

"It's not usually given to girls, though. What —what did—what are you usually called?"

"*Cherie*," she said, "or *petite*, or—you know—just some name like that. They said that same thing what you said about Lodoiska—it is too long. I think you call me 'Midge'—I like that name. It is not everybody has it."

"I should think not," he assented, smiling. "'Midge'—'Midge'—well, it isn't so bad. We'll try it."

"And now," she began, looking calmly up at him, "what I call you, eh?"

"My name is Evert Peters."

"*Doctor* Evert Peters?"

"Well, they call me so."

She reflected.

"'Doctor,'" she repeated: "I like not that. It is too much physic. Peters—no. I call you Ev-ert."

He smiled at the dainty un-English accentuation.

"Ev-ert," she said again: "Yes, that is good. I call you Ev-ert."

The innocent audacity of the idea caught his fancy. How many years it was since any one had called him "Evert"! and it had a pretty sound as she spoke it. Yes, she should call him "Evert"—for three weeks.

"'Evert' it is!" he said, gayly, and caught her up and kissed her.

* * * * *

Élise came later in the afternoon, a tidy, grizzled little woman, with a face like a small and well-disposed gargoyle. The housekeeper was pleased with her, and they got on pleasantly together, setting amiably to work to prepare dinner.

The result of the collaboration was satisfactory. At six o'clock the Doctor and the Midge sat down to a modest, but well-cooked meal, the serving whereof, having been left to the Midge, was graced with numerous refinements, unsub-

stantial in themselves, but appetizing in conjunction with the labors of Elise. She herself called his attention to them, with frank pleasure in her skill, and gave him hints of the way in which these accomplishments had been acquired.

There was a napkin folded so as to resemble a snail-shell, with the snail's horned head peeping out.

"*That*," she asserted, "is a—what is then the word in English?—*a chef-d'œuvre*. The other things all the world can do; but that is the Art, you understand—that is an invention. It was Alcide who has inventioned that. Alcide was our waiter at the hotel at Nice. Not at Mme. Cavelli—that was the little *pension*—boarding-house—where we went first—but up at the hotel. We have gone there after Papa had his great luck at Monaco."

"Eh?" broke in the Doctor, with his fork poised in the air.

"He made much money at Monaco—at the Bank. Three thousand *francs*. It was not for long. He had bad luck next week."

"Gambling?"

It was her turn to say "Eh?"

"What do you mean by 'luck'?"

"Oh! He made money at the play—at the table. They play cards there—thousands—oh, thousands of people, all at the same time. Sometimes they make much money. Most times they

lose. The bank makes all the money most times. It is amusing."

The Doctor distinctly heard the call of duty.

"In this country we think it's wrong to do that —to play cards for money."

"You think that? That is amusing, too," she said, with pleasant indifference.

The Doctor was silent. He felt himself helpless. He did not try to illuminate with the rush-light of an impromptu disquisition on the sin of gambling the vast moral darkness that this answer revealed. But he tried to sound the profundity of her ignorance; and he led the conversation by slow degrees to the subject of religion, and made some desultory inquiries into the faith of her parents. The topic did not interest the Midge, and she gave him but scanty information before she skipped away to some more congenial theme. Maman was a Catholic, she said; but she did not go to confession. Maman said *that* was superstitious, and Papa said so too. Papa was a Church of England man. That was the only church for a gentleman, he said. He did not go to church, of course; there were no churches of that kind anywhere they had been. Yes, that was strange; but Papa said there were none. Papa knew a great many priests. He liked them when they played piquet. She liked them too, herself. Père Mathieu was very nice. He always gave her bonbons. Sometimes he brought the bon-

bons in the same pocket with his tobacco, and that was not nice. But it was good of him, all the same. Père Mathieu drank too much wine. And then she asked the Doctor if he did not think it was bad to drink too much wine.

At nine o'clock he told her that he was going around to the Brasserie Pigault for an hour. The announcement was made with some awkwardness; but it was received with a cheerful submission that rather disappointed him. If he had known more of womankind, it might have put him on his guard.

She got him his hat and coat, and she mentioned a number of small occupations with which she proposed to while away the period of his desertion. She accepted her prospective loneliness meekly and uncomplainingly, making no manner of remonstrance. But when he left her, she stood at the head of the stairs and watched him go. He reached the lower hall and lingered a moment to hear her turn back in his room and shut the door. But he caught no sound from above, and he went out with the uncomfortable feeling that the lonely little figure was still standing there, at the top of the stairs, looking down the way he had gone.

The comforts of the Brasserie Pigault did not appeal to him that evening. He had gone there as a matter of principle, feeling that there was something weak in breaking up his regular

habits, even to please himself. Yet he could not enjoy his beer while he had the unpleasant feeling that took possession of him as he thought of the lonely Midge at the top of the dark stairs. He refused to play a game of dominos with Mr. Martin, and then he felt still more uncomfortable, as he saw the poor old gentleman sit watching the door, in hopes that M. Ovide Marié, or some other friendly soul, would come in to play with him.

Dr. Peters read two columns of editorials in one of the morning papers. When he had finished the two columns, he found that he had paid no attention whatever to the meaning of the words. He was thoroughly dissatisfied with himself. He decided to go home and go to bed. It was early, of course; but then he could stroll slowly back, and perhaps walk a few blocks up Fifth Avenue. It was a fine night, and not cold. The brasserie was close and warm. A saunter in the open air would be just the thing for him. But when he was once in the street, he walked home as straight and as fast as he could.

The Midge welcomed him with a kiss, making him bend down so that she might put her arms about his neck. His attitude was symbolic, and he recognized the fact. He knew why he had come home; he knew that she knew it, and he felt that he was being rewarded for good behavior. It was his turn for submission. He accepted his subjugation in penitent gladness.

She invited him to sit down in the easy-chair, and she climbed on his knee and tucked her head under his ear; and they sat there chatting for an hour. She treated him to various small caresses from time to time. It was very pleasant; but he remembered the case of the butcher's boy, and he began to have a dim idea of what she meant by "being nice" to people. It disturbed him a little. He had not known that they began so young.

Lacking any positive knowledge on the subject, the Doctor concluded that half-past ten was a good hour for a child of twelve to go to bed; so at half-past ten she prepared her temporary couch, by his orders. Then he sent her into the hall-way to turn out the gas, and he made a hurried trip to his own room and back. After he had bidden her good-night, and had closed the door behind him, she found on her bed a package. Mme. Pigault had acted as the Doctor's agent in purchasing the contents. They supplied certain crying needs in the Midge's wardrobe. Presumably they answered their purpose. But never, not on the morrow, or at any time thereafter, did she make the slightest mention of them.

* * * * *

It was not three days before the Doctor woke to an uneasy consciousness that he had made a grave misstep. He had to acknowledge to

himself that an attachment of the affections was beginning to bind him to this waif who must in a couple of weeks be sent across the ocean to her natural guardians and protectors. And when he admitted to his reason that the attachment was growing, within his heart he knew that it had grown—the mischief was done. And the worst of it was—*she* was the worst of it. There was nothing of the coxcomb about Dr. Peters. He was rather modestly distrustful of all proffered affection, from man, woman or child. He knew, moreover, how often a child's fondness is a mere cat-like adaptation to agreeable conditions. But he perceived in this child an ardent temperament and a precocious decision of character that gave her likes and dislikes the weight and value of maturity. And that she was seriously fond of him, already, there was no doubt. She was a waif, and she was tying herself up to him as the one thing stable and trustworthy in a stormy world.

Seeing all this, dreading the parting close at hand, he proceeded to make the situation worse day by day. When a strong will is once handed over to the control of the ill-regulated affections, those beggars-on-horseback are wont to ride their prey pretty hard. With a complete abandonment of discretion and common-sense, Dr. Peters devoted all his time to the society of a weird, strange, heathenish infant, of foreign ex-

traction, who did not belong to him, and who had dangerously clinging ways about her.

After his overthrow on the second evening after her arrival, he made up his mind to give up the Brasserie Pigault during the Midge's stay. Pretty soon he found that he was giving up everything else in the way of individual initiative. If he went to walk, he took her with him. If he worked at his gun, it was only when she condescended to perch on his work-bench and chatter to him. Work was neglected when it struck her vagrant fancy that they both would be better employed looking in the shop-windows on Broadway, or inspecting the steamers at the West Street piers.

It was very foolish; it was worse than foolish, he guiltily admitted to himself when he thought it over at night, after the little one had gone to bed. It was a self-indulgence likely to bring cruel consequences.

Look at it whatever way he might, he could only reproach himself. His conscience told him of the wrong he was doing the child, and his reason had no adequate excuse to offer. True, he had been lonely. He had not known the measure of his own loneliness until her advent opened his eyes. She filled his days so full of bright companionship that he began to realize how empty they had been before she came; how much emptier they would be after she had gone.

And yet—did he want to keep her with him? No, he had to answer himself. How could he take the charge of this untutored mind, assume the vast responsibility of her education, moral and mental, take upon himself the burden of shaping her life? Of course, there was no need of thinking of it—it was not a possibility to be considered—but if even in the speculation of fancy he was forced to acknowledge that he did not care to have the child for his own, what right had he to treat her as though she were indeed his?

But ten days slipped away, and two weeks, before he finally cast up accounts with himself. He had made two or three attempts to hold her off at arm's length, by way of preparing her for the approaching separation. They had been pitiful failures. She had only nestled the closer, each time. And now, he reflected, it was too late. The order of separation must come in a week. Conscience should be silent for that week, while he and the Midge enjoyed their comradeship. And conscience acquiesced with base and treacherous readiness, until three days or so before the letter from Europe was due, rising up then to torment him with refreshed vigor.

The letter should have arrived on a Saturday. It did not come then, nor on Monday, nor on Tuesday. He felt nervous and unstrung. He took to excessive smoking. The Midge con-

cluded that he was sick, and consoled him with caressès which he received in shame and abasement of spirit. He wished the letter would appear, to end the matter; but he clung to each hour of suspense, and when it turned up on Wednesday, he was no more ready for it than he had been a fortnight before.

It was a brief letter; but it was clear and explicit. Sir Richard Talbot did not feel himself in a position to undertake the care of Mrs. Hugh Talbot's child. He had already extended to his unfortunate brother all the assistance in his power. The claims upon him were such that he did not feel justified in going to any further expense. He begged leave to inform Dr. Peters that his brother's marriage had been made against the wishes of his family, and that he, Sir Richard, could not consent to consider himself as in any way responsible for the maintenance of his brother's child. If, however, the child could be placed in a respectable orphan asylum, not under the charge of Romanists or Dissenters—this was a positive condition—Sir Richard would pay any necessary fees. If Dr. Peters would communicate with Sir Richard's lawyers, whose address was enclosed, he would find them fully advised. They would also be prepared to make good to Dr. Peters any expenditure of money or time which he might have been obliged to make on account of the child.

"By thunder!" said the Doctor to himself, "he did want to 'tip me 'arf-a-crown,' for a fact."

Sir Richard's niece came into the room while the Doctor was tearing up the letter and dropping the pieces into the fire.

"Midge," he said, "how would you like to stay with me—I mean for good and all—forever?"

"But certainly I will stay with you forever," she said, rubbing her cheek against his coat-sleeve: "what is it you have thought?"

"I thought you were going to your uncle in England."

She pursed her lips and shook her head in airy, contemptuous negation.

"No," she said, "I never have meant to go there. I have meant to stay with you."

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was done. The move was made, and, like a wise commander, the Doctor burned his ships without procrastination. That day he called upon Peloubet, and the next day Sir Richard's lawyers were notified that the child was in charge of the French Benevolent Society, and that she would be properly cared for without cost to Sir Richard. And the lawyers informed their client of this fact, and frankly advised him to take no further steps in the matter. He took none.

The Doctor went before the Board of Control of the Society, established his respectability and responsibility, and was formally made the guardian of Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. And then, to finish his work, he took the Midge to Mme. Pigault, a dressmaker was called in, and the three of them "confectioned" a wardrobe. The Midge had a voice in all that was said, and the wardrobe did not lack the stamp of her individuality. She wanted to have some mourning dresses; but the Doctor emphatically objected, and so she gave up the idea and went in for artistic arrangements of red ribbon.

So it was finished; the last scruple of conscience was satisfied; there was no act left undone in formal confirmation and establishment of his impulsive adoption of the child. What he had undertaken hastily he had carried out with honest deliberation. And now he could afford to ask himself about the wisdom of it.

There is, I believe, a disease known as "engaged-fright." It is said to attack young men and women who are betrothed, when they realize that in the game of matrimony they have put their stakes upon the table, and the wheel is spinning. In some instances, it forces them to snatch their money back, and withdraw from the game. But in the majority of cases, they struggle against the sensation, feeling that they have gone too far to get out honorably or comfortably, and they leave it to time and married life to "pinch into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of pre-matrimonial acquaintance." Thus do many blunder into happiness.

The Doctor's feelings were not unlike those of a very unsettled young man in wholly different circumstances. If his doubts could have affected his action, he would have been positively unhappy. But he reflected, with a shameful satisfaction in the moral weakness of his defense, that, for better or worse, the matter was settled; he had only to do his best, and trust that all would be well.

But doubts rose up to harass him in such

numbers that in the midst of his trouble he had a humorous suspicion of the morbid and fantastic nature of their origin.

No possible suggestion of future misfortune was spared him. What did he know, after all, of this child? What inherited traits might she not have that would cause him trouble hereafter? What ugliness of character might she not develop, to put herself outside of his affection and regard? And even if she were all that she should be, what guarantee could he give himself that his own fondness for her would not some day wear out in the selfishness of age? Was he not unwise to open the gate of that quiet garden-plot of his life, to let in a stranger from the street, who would share with him his secluded walks? Had he not been in sole possession too long to bear such intrusion with lasting good grace?

He asked himself such questions as these. He even went further, and questioned the sincerity and genuineness of the child's affection for him. From this he came back to sanity, when he perceived the depths of cynical speculation in which the idea involved him.

But when the unprofitable self-torment was put aside, enough remained to worry him. The Midge had shown no evil tendencies whatever; but she dwelt serenely in an atmosphere of pagan un-morality, doing right only by natural impulse and an innate sense of ethical good taste. He

did not feel sure that he was competent to undertake her education; and if he were, he did not know where to begin.

The time to come dismayed him. In ten or a dozen years she would become of marriageable age. Where was he to find her a husband? The Doctor was not socially ambitious, nor given to overmuch observation of class distinctions; but he could see that his little circle of casual acquaintances was not likely to furnish forth an eligible husband for a young woman of rather delicate clay. And if she did not marry, what then? When he himself came to die, at sixty or seventy—the Doctor thought that he would be ready to die at sixty or seventy—was he to leave her in mature but unprotected maidenhood?

When a man is in a morbid state such as this, and is trying to keep his internal irritation to himself, a chance abrasion from the outside penetrates his self-consciousness with peculiar cruelty. He feels that the world knows, or is likely to know, what a pitiable thing he is; and every trifling annoyance to his pride seems like a wound at the hand of malicious contempt. Madame Pigault unwittingly stabbed the Doctor under the fifth rib, and he himself gave the blade a twist.

He had dropped in to pay the dressmaker's bill, and lingering a moment to chat, for he felt somewhat of a deserter under the Pigault roof,

his awkwardness in his new position betrayed him into a clumsy jest.

"I feel rather strange, Madame Pigault," he said, "entertaining a young lady in my bachelor's hall. But I guess I'm old enough. You don't think people will talk, do you?"

"What shall they talk?" demanded Mme. Pigault, with sympathetic warmth. "They can only say that you are very good. We other women, we will not speak bad of you. It is not every man, *voyez-vous*, Monsieur le Docteur, who is generous like you. We know that—we know what they are, the men. May the good God have pity of us! But we know what they are. They will only say you have behaved noble."

The Doctor murmured a confused acknowledgment, and digested the compliment when he got out in the street. His cheeks burnt when he understood it.

"I'm damned," he said to himself, "if they ain't beasts!"

They were aliens and strangers. He had lived among them for fifteen years; but they were aliens and strangers, after all. He could never be quite at home with them; they could never be to him exactly as his own people. There was always a difference—a something at bottom that was irreconcilable with perfect understanding or friendship. Here was this woman, a religious woman, a good wife, a good mother, calmly and as a

matter of course putting this hideous interpretation on his simple action. Had they, then, no decent, natural clean-mindedness? He remembered how in his boyhood he had walked to morning church by his mother's side, and how they had passed the French Canadians who formed a little colony near by, strolling home from mass. His mother had looked the other way as they went by; but he had stared at them in contempt mingled with a certain awe at the audacity of creatures who could dare to live and breathe, and yet refuse to conform to the correct standard of Protestant America. Was there not, indeed, some justification for his childish narrowness of mind? Was not the stamp of a hopeless inferiority upon the race?

He was vexed and hurt; but after a while his sense of justice asserted itself. He had convicted Mme. Pigault of wronging him with an unclean suspicion; but he had to give her credit for the charity that pardoned the imputed sin, and cordially approved the supposed penitential reparation. He could not help thinking that he was lucky to live in a community where such a misunderstanding could not possibly put an innocent child under a cruel social ban.

He had another remembrance of Oneida County. He remembered when Injun Jane came down from the Reservation to sell baskets. She brought her boy with her, and none of the boys of the

town would play with him. Everybody knew that he was the son of Pete Doolittle, who owned the farm back of the Peters's, and who had also a family of young Doolittles, born with the sanction of society and religion. But nobody would play with Injun Jane's Joe, and so while she sold her baskets at the kitchen door, he stood alone in the road, a bright, slim boy, not much browner than the other country-bred youngsters, noticeably different only in his black, coarse, straight hair, like a colt's mane. He was proud and silent, and he made no attempt to speak to any of them; but twanged his wonderful snakewood bow and sent arrow after arrow through a knot-hole. It was his one form of silent self-assertion, and the other boys in their hearts envied his skill, as they hung over the fences and jeered at him as loudly as they dared to. Evert Peters had been one of those mean boys in his time, and he thought of it with shame. Yet he knew that it had not been from inborn meanness in him, or in Visscher Jansen, or in Phil Doolittle. They had merely reflected the sentiment of the elder community. It seemed that there were expansions of Christian charity in the French quarter of New York that were unknown in Oneida County.

There were plenty of annoyances for the Doctor, in his new capacity of guardian; but he did not doubt and suffer wholly as one without

hope. He might arraign himself for his unwise soft-heartedness; but he continued to be soft-hearted, and he enjoyed the consequences. He felt that he was having a good time, a better time, in every way, than he could ever remember before. Viewed as a responsibility, the Midge undeniably caused him uneasiness; but considered as a companion, she was unmixed and unlimited fun. Even when the companion gave way to the fatherless, motherless child, and she sobbed on his shoulder, her personal grief never put her apart from him. He had always the knowledge that his love and tenderness were a consolation to her, and her every outburst of grief for those she had lost made her somehow more his own.

She had, moreover, in her vehement, earnest nature, a faculty of feeling one thing at a time which helped her greatly through the first hard weeks. When she put aside her sorrow, she devoted herself to what she had in hand wholly and thoroughly. When she thought of pleasing or serving her protector, she gave him her eager affection to the utter exclusion of every other interest. He got into the habit of slipping in to look at her an hour or two after she had gone to bed, and he often found her awake and crying softly to herself. But when he sat down by her side and began to soothe her, she resolutely dried her tears, and turned her whole attention to him,

and he became, for the time, the one important being in her small world. So her housekeeping, which was something between work and play, was all-engrossing while she was about it. Her sense of loss was loyally strong and lasting; but its manifestations were intense and exclusive, and when it had found its relief, she took up her new life in the same spirit of loyalty.

She certainly put her whole soul into the furnishing of her bed-room. It was the large back room. The Doctor had given it up to her, and had taken his models and tools to the front hall-room up stairs. This was only a temporary arrangement, so far as his work was concerned; but he had come to the conclusion that it would be well to let the work go, for a little while. He would come back to it with a fresh zest, and he might thus accomplish more. And he was not quite certain in his own mind whether it was worth while to go on with the cannon or not. His original idea seemed to have grown antiquated. And at one time he had had some notion of trying to simplify the mechanism of the sewing-machine. Perhaps it might be wise to look into the sewing-machine question once more. At any rate, he could do nothing until the Midge was really settled, and their various plans of home-making were carried out.

The room was certainly very pretty when the Midge at last took possession. He was surprised

to see how his own conception of what a room should be had been disregarded with pleasing effect. There was a Frenchy chintz-pattern paper on the walls, with a darker dado—this was the Doctor's first experience of a dado—and there were curtains and portières of cretonne. Cretonne and portières were also new words to him. He could not quite remember how these things had been done. The tradesmen had suggested them, to the best of his remembrance; the Midge had approved, with a prompt exhibition of easy familiarity with such matters; he had disapproved, and, somehow, there the things were, and he was satisfied. He had wanted black walnut furniture, and had sternly objected to mahogany with brass trimmings as being old-fashioned; but he had yielded to the supercilious scorn of the dealers and the strong backing the Midge gave them, and there was the mahogany and brass, just like that which he had seen in his boyhood, except that it was more shiny. There was only one thing in the room that he had bought uncontrolled and unaided, and that was the brass bedstead, with its light chintz-draped tester. And he never would have bought that if the Midge had not casually and artlessly described such a bed, which she had seen in a stolen peep into the apartments of some royal personage in a French watering-place hotel.

The general effect was creditable to the Midge.

He had had to chasten her somewhat extravagant taste in certain particulars. She had expressed a yearning, repressed at his especial desire, for white and gold; and he felt that he had not been too firm. He had been obliged to deny her a bisque clock, representing a pannier of roses; and he had stood out against a waxed floor. But, looking on the work as a whole, it dawned upon him that the Midge had some lights in matters of taste which had never been revealed to his artistic consciousness.

Yet there were some of her fancies that were quite incomprehensible to him. While they were in the way of furnishing, they made some radical changes in the sitting-room, to its great improvement; and for the uneasy easy-chair of faded green reps, they substituted a leather-covered structure that was as comfortable as it was big. But the Midge insisted on taking the discarded piece of furniture into her pretty, new room, and, despite his protests, she had a slip-cover of chintz made for it, and put the ungainly thing in a sunny corner by the window and sat in it to sew and to study.

For she had begun a course of study. She had at first expressed a doubt as to there being anything left for her to learn; but after a test examination, the Doctor had become convinced that not only must her education be taken in hand at once, but he must take it in hand him-

self. No school was fitted to cope with such a bewildering combination of knowledge and ignorance. In simple arithmetic she had great proficiency. She could calculate with marvelous rapidity in French, German, English and American currency. She had, so to speak, an empirical knowledge of European geography. She could read fluently in French and English. But she had never regarded it as necessary or expedient to learn to spell in either language. He asked her to give him a specimen of her hand-writing. She evaded compliance at the moment, but the next morning, when he left the house, he found this note hid in his hat:

Mi dire everte

i louve you bot i louve not the riting

i can djiographie à ritmatique franche ingliche and a litle too couque bot not the riting seau wel

i dounot thingue it is goude for a wouman too nau too muche howe too rite

i am your afectuous frend

midj

When he had got this insight into her system of phonetics, he went out and bought a lot of school-books, and he began his task of instruction with many forebodings. But she soon relieved his fears. She saw that he desired it, and she studied hard. She learned only too rapidly; but she retained a fair proportion of what she learned. Of course, he had to make some allowance for her

habits of independent thought. To the end she retained a profound contempt for the unpractical character of the man who wrote the spelling-book.

"*Acme, apostroph', asth-ma,*" she said, running her finger down the column, "what shall he want of such words like those? I never shall say them. *Apple, acorn, ashes*—there is the sense. If you go take a walk in the country, you see acorns, you see apples. But you never shall say: 'See the beautiful apostroph''—'look at the fine asth-ma.' It is a stupidness, to write such words that nobody will say."

The spelling-book was a humiliation for the Midge, and in self-defense she sought to vindicate her claim to intellectual maturity by demanding some French books to read. The Doctor went to the little "Librairie" with the blue sign, in South Fifth avenue, and bought a couple of volumes of the Bibliothèque Rose—the "Mémoires d'un Ane" and "l'Auberge de l'Ange Gardien." She contemptuously rejected both as childish and wholly beneath her. She wanted novels. So late one afternoon he made a solitary excursion to Brentano's.

The winter was nearly over. It was a soft, moist, slushy day—toward the end of February. The city was soaked in soiled snow, rapidly melting into soiled water. The shop doors were open, and through them came the rumble of stage-ridden Broadway, pierced by the high, shrill,

humming ring of the car-wheels on the rails. A thin stream of handsomely dressed women trickled in, swerved from counter to counter, and trickled out. Here and there, browsing on the fields of outspread books and pamphlets, were odd-looking men; men who would have been noticed in a crowd, each for some eccentricity or individuality of dress or personal appearance; men whom one would have called "professional," without exactly knowing why. In the "music department," a piano was pealing forth the latest waltz, and a dozen pretty bonneted heads nodded in time with its measure. The well-dressed clerks moved leisurely about, chatting in a friendly way with old customers. It did not look like a shop. The whole thing suggested an afternoon reception; and the clerks carried out the idea. They looked like a reception committee. The Doctor felt somewhat as though he were intruding upon a semi-private social affair. He hardly knew which way to turn, or how to go about his business of book-buying.

There was a pretty young woman at the desk. She had a sweet and kindly face, and the Doctor addressed himself to her. She pointed with her pen to the far-off counter where the French books were sold, and when he reached it, a courteous young Frenchman laid before him a half dozen of the latest importations. The covers were enough for the Doctor.

"Here!" he expostulated, "this won't do. I want something for a young lady—*pour une jeune fille*—see? This isn't the sort of thing at all."

But the courteous young Frenchman had been carried off by a group of rather too well-dressed men, with handsome, over-fed faces, who seemed to be in search of just that "sort of thing," in a more exalted degree.

"Try this!" said a voice over his head. The Doctor looked up bewildered, and saw on the top of a small step-ladder, set against the book-shelves on the wall, a broad-shouldered young man in a rough tweed suit, with a cloth traveling cap on the side of his head. He had a handsome, happy, boyish face, with curling fair hair and blue eyes, strikingly dark for his complexion. On his upper lip was what might some day be a moustache, and under it he showed, as he smiled, white, even teeth. He looked down at the Doctor and the blue eyes laughed with amiable mischief. For a moment he stood holding out a book, and then he poised himself on one toe and skipped down from his perch much as a cat comes down a wall, landing almost as lightly.

"This is the sort of thing you want, I guess, he said: "there isn't a blush in it—perfectly safe." He handed the Doctor a copy of Sardou's "Perle Noire," and he smiled again as his eye ran over the volumes that had been proffered by the courteous Frenchman.

"Pretty hard lot he gave you, didn't he? But then French novels mostly *are* a pretty hard lot, Captain."

"Why do you call me Captain?" the Doctor asked, sternly. He felt a certain irritation. He would not have cared to own to himself that any part of it was attributable to the stranger's display of athletic, exuberant youth. Yet one has to be a little older than the Doctor was to look quite kindly upon a boy in his first years of spring and snap.

"Well—you *are* a captain, aren't you?" laughed the young man: "or you have been, anyway."

"Not since you were in baby-clothes," returned the Doctor, grimly. The youth flushed under the rebuke, and frankly apologized.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "I had no right to be so fresh with a man of your—to talk like that, I mean. But I was sure you were a military man, or had been—I knew it by the way you carried yourself. I'm in the navy—that is, I'm just out of the school-ship"— he flushed again—"and I want to get transferred to the army, if I can—so you see I've got my head a little turned on the military question."

He smiled, and the Doctor smiled in return.

"That's all right," he said, "only I'm not accustomed to using a title. I was only a volunteer captain, anyway, and colonels and majors are so cheap, now a days, that a captain is nowhere."

"They were *somewhere*, though, when you were a captain," suggested the boy, with an admiring look in his eyes: "I wish I'd had a chance at the business then—only I was in baby-clothes;" and again he colored and laughed.

"No, you don't," demurred the Doctor; "you wouldn't have liked it. It was too—mussy. Did you tell me this book was all correct and proper?"

"Straight as a string, sir. How old—I beg your pardon—but how old, about, is the young lady? I might find you something else."

"Let me see," mused the Doctor, aloud, "let me see. She was born twelve or thirteen years ago. That'll make her—say about eighteen or twenty, now, as far as I can calculate."

The young man stared in frank amazement.

"You see," the Doctor went on, "she's a rather peculiar young woman. You can't tie her down to years, the way you would any one else. If you want to put it in plain, solid figures, she's only twelve or so. But sometimes I think she's a little older than I am myself. I'm not sure that I can get literature aged enough for her. At any rate, she wants regular grown-up French novels, and she's got to have them—if they can be got full-blown *and* respectable."

He checked himself with a frown. What was he doing, running on thus like a garrulous proud parent, in the presence of a perfect stranger! It

was small consolation to reflect that he had been talking to himself, rather than to the stranger.

But the young man set things right with his cheery, friendly laugh, and in five minutes the two were ransacking the shop for virtuous French fiction.

When their search was ended, the afternoon reception was well-nigh over. In the streets the gas-lamps blazed brightly through the heavy dusk, flickering in a chill, raw wind that had suddenly come up from the East river. The Doctor buttoned his coat, but the young man seemed quite comfortable in his tweed suit, as they strode down University Place together.

He gave the Doctor his card—"Paul Hathaway, U. S. N."—and the Doctor, who had no card, imparted his name.

It was Mr. Paul Hathaway's first card-plate, beyond a doubt. His giving the card was unnecessary, for one thing, and, for another, he took it out of a very new and very tightly packed card-case. And in his giving of it there was a certain touch of conscious importance that betrayed the novelty of the act. The Doctor felt sure that he had the first card out of the hundred that Brentano had delivered that afternoon.

Mr. Paul Hathaway did all the talking. He spoke of himself, of the school-ship, of his short "leave," to come to an end the next week, of how he had employed it in making sketching-

tours around New York—he was a bad amateur artist, he explained.

They parted at Eighth Street, Paul Hathaway going off to his East-side lodging; and the Doctor, as he looked at the light sailor-like swaying of the broad shoulders vanishing in the wintry darkness, felt something of his first unreasonable feeling of irritation coming back to him. Why should the spring go out of a man's walk in the slipping away of a few miserable, unnoticed years?

The books that the Doctor brought the Midge that night were a mixed lot. There was "la Perle Noire," "la Petite Fadette," "le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre," "Paul et Virginie," Feuillet's "Sybille," "un Philosophe sous les Toits" and "Elizabeth, ou les Exilés de Sibérie"—he had read, in his boyhood, "Élisabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia," and he was pleased to think, as he did, that it had been translated into French.

The Midge received these offerings with varying favor. Her criticism on "Élisabeth" was decided. She called it "rococo."

Some months later, the Doctor happened to take up "Sybille," and, after glancing at a page or two, he read it through. When he had read it through, he put it in the fire. From that time on he was the implacable foe of French fiction in the household.

CHAPTER IX.

THE winter slipped away and spring was upon the land. The Doctor found trouble in making himself believe that it was six months since his fortress had been invaded by the conquering queen whose sweetly imperious rule he was glad to own. He had looked upon the time as a period of preparation, of making ready to settle down under the new order of things. It was only the green of the grass and the blossoms on the trees that brought to him a realizing sense of the fact that the new order had been established long before, and that as to settling down, there was no such thing as absolute settling down while this growing, changing, ever-developing young life formed a part of his own. He could never come to an understanding with her, as he had come to an understanding with himself. However well he might grow to know her, her own highly original individuality must take its own course of evolution, and there were surprises for him all along the course.

Being brought up with a round turn by the change of the seasons, he took account of stock,

after a fashion. He found himself best able to realize the changes in the Midge and the changes in his own surroundings by considering the astonishing dimness that shrouded the past. It was hard for him to remember that things had ever been otherwise than they were now. The meagre loneliness of his life seemed something of ten or twenty years back. There was nothing in the Midge to-day to suggest the pathetic figure of the previous December. She was rather plump now, was the Midge; certainly pretty; well-dressed, with a contented, comfortable air about her that might have made her uninteresting if it had not been for her inborn coquetry. She had just enough whimsical airiness to carry off her self-complacency, which was great for one of her size.

She had changed in other ways, too. A distinct Frenchiness of idiom was never to be wholly eradicated from her conversation; but she was no longer positively incorrect in speech, except under stress of excitement. When once her pride had been awakened, she had put all her energy into the task of self-improvement; and she modeled her language so closely on that of the Doctor that he was obliged to reform his own vocabulary and give heed to many neglected subtleties of English grammar.

In fact, she made the Doctor her model to an extent that alarmed him. Except in matters of

dress and gastronomy, she adopted him and all his codes, whole and complete. She had evidently become aware of the existence of standards, moral and social, superior to those of her infant years. She had discovered that to this new world into which she had come, the life her parents had led was something positively objectionable. The feminine mind makes naturally for the respectable; and the Midge accepted the new standards and secretly felt ashamed of the old. When she spoke of her parents now, it was never to recount their vagabond adventures; she made pitiful little attempts to dress them up in her memory as rather nice and important people, emphasizing everything that was dignified and well-bred about them, and tenderly covering up all that was mean and poor.

The Doctor was glad of this. The rehabilitation of the Talbot family amused him, and touched his sense of the pathetic. He was glad, further, to note her quick acceptance of his cherished principles of conduct. He had a military character, in some things. He was scrupulously truthful, punctiliously faithful in the discharge of duty, exact, prompt, temperate, and just, as far as in him lay. Or at least he tried to be all these, and he made a fairly good job of it for a common mortal. And the child imitated him at a distance, and with a feminine difference.

But this very imitation gave him a new cause for uneasiness. Dr. Peters was reasonably well satisfied with his moral code. It had cost him enough to construct it, in bitter struggle with temptation and perplexity. He had tried it; he had lived by it; and he knew that, subject to frequent revision, and followed in due humility, it was a good, practicable, working code. But back of the code was the making of all codes, and the standard by which all codes must be judged. And while in that regard he was at ease, how was it with his charge? He had his religion. It was not a creed, nor a system, nor a formula of any sort. It was something compounded of hope and fancy and speculation, that satisfied his spiritual cravings. It was the private adjustment that every thinking man makes with his own immortalities. But he knew that it was practically incommunicable. He could not write it out, as he might have written out his views on conduct, and hand the schedule to his pupil to be learned over night. It was the growth of individual experience and individual thought. It belonged to him, and to him alone.

Now, was he not in honor bound to provide a religion for the Midge? He could not expect her to construct one for herself. Women, as far as he knew, had their religions supplied to them ready made, and were supposed to take them without questioning. His mother had accepted

the Thirty-nine Articles. If she had discovered on her death-bed that there was a fortieth that should have been accepted with the others, in the first instance, and had been left out by mistake, she would have accepted it without asking what it was.

He found himself facing the religions of the world, and called upon to select one to fit a child —one that she would not grow out of; one that would last her through a life that might be long or short, calm or troubled, happy or miserable. He was only a plain man, who had been a medical student, a civil engineer, a volunteer soldier, a would-be inventor, and an amateur doctor. He felt humbly ignorant and bewildered. He wished that he knew more—or less.

What complicated the matter was the consideration that, even if his conscience would allow it, he could not pick out a creed at random and present it to his charge. He had never faced the great question which men in general prefer to ignore: Do women reason? He did not face it now. But he knew that the Midge had some appalling logical processes among her intellectual functions. And he reflected, with a chilled dismay, that her final test of anything which he asked her to believe would be to ask him if he believed it himself.

It was an awkward situation for the Doctor. When the Midge first came to him, the necessity

of improving her physical health had been of the first importance. She was nervous and feeble, and all his efforts had been to the one end of making her sound and strong. Sunday had been their chosen day for excursions and open-air exercise. In the winter, they had made little trips to Central Park, or had taken sleigh-rides, when there was any snow. And now that the spring had come, and was fast changing to summer, they had taken their Sundays to invade Westchester, Staten Island, and the suburbs of Brooklyn and Jersey City.

When he told her that these outings, the crowning joy of her week, must be abandoned, and that she must go to church, she acquiesced; but her disappointment was unconcealable.

He took her to the chapel where the Reverend Mr. Pratt preached. Mr. Pratt was surprised to see them there. He had always supposed that Dr. Peters attended divine service somewhere up town.

They went three times to Mr. Pratt's chapel. The second and third Sundays, Dr. Peters noticed that the Midge's lips were moving silently through all the time of service and sermon. As soon as they were out of church she eagerly addressed him:

"Do we need to go any more? I know it now."

"Know what?" demanded the Doctor.

"All those things they say. It is the same every Sunday. I have learned them all by heart —I will say them to you, and you can see."

"But they aren't the same thing every time, Midge. The lessons are different, and so is the collect."

"Well, we can read those at home. I will learn those, too, if you want."

"But the sermon 's different. Mr. Pratt has a new sermon every Sunday."

"Oh, Mis-ter Pratt!" she returned, with innocent scorn; "do you care what *he* says, Ev-ert? He is no priest—Elise has told me so."

Further investigation convinced the Doctor that the Midge would never receive the ministrations of the Reverend Mr. Pratt in a proper spirit. She had disliked him at their first meeting, and she had since learned the opinion held of him in the quarter, where he was looked upon as an elegant amateur of religion, not to be mentioned in the same breath with faithful, conscientious Father Dubé, or even with energetic, soul-amassing Brother Strong, of the Bethel.

They went no more to the chapel, and the outings began again; but on rainy Sundays the Doctor slipped out by himself about eleven o'clock, each day visiting a new church, and listening attentively to the prayers and the preach-

He heard, in the course of that summer and

the ensuing fall, a great deal of very interesting discourse; but he did not come across any variety of religious instruction that seemed to him to fit the Midge's case.

In the autumn he came to the conclusion that he was beginning his search at the wrong end. The Midge was, after all, a child, and she needed the education of a child. He sent her to the Sunday-school of the chapel.

The Sunday-school scheme was a complete failure; but it brought about a better understanding. After the second Sunday of attendance, the Midge revolted, and vigorously.

"It is a nonsense, Ev-ert," she said, excitedly; "*vois-tu*, they have given me this little yellow thing to learn"—and she held up a printed text—"and I can learn ten hundred of those in a day. And they have told me such histories!—of an old man who is mocked of the little boys, and, *figure-toi*, there are bears come out of a forest and eat them up! Is it that I am a child, to be told such stories like that?"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the Doctor, "why, that was Elijah—or Elisha—I forget which. Why, he was a prophet."

"I do not know what was his business; but he had no hair. And I am not a little boy who is rude to old gentlemen. Why do they tell me such stories?"

"My dear," said the Doctor, "you needn't go

to the Sunday-school any more. I'm going to take this business in hand myself. It seems to be laid out for me to do work out of my line, and I'm going to stumble right on."

He got down from his bookshelf his mother's Bible, which stood between "Gummere's Surveying" and "Peveril of the Peak," and that day he began a course of readings from the Scriptures, accompanied with comment and criticism of a varied and often original nature, remembered tradition struggling uncertainly within dependent thought.

The Midge was interested at last. She was always willing to sit on the ground, with her head on his knee, and to listen wisely to his reading and to his remarks.

Her ingrained skepticism led her to ask for his personal confirmation of the story of Eve and the serpent.

"My dear," he answered, gravely, "we can't tell people to believe things, or not to believe. Everybody has to act for himself or herself. My mother died believing every word of this, from cover to cover. I'm in a sort of a mixed condition, myself. When you get older—the subject is a little extensive for you, just at present—you can form your own conclusions, and I'll try my best to help you. Just now, all that you and I have got to do is to get all the good we can out of it. As to the serpent—well, some people have

said that this is a sort of a fable, as it were; and they say the moral is that a young woman may sometimes know too much, or think she does."

The Midge was silent.

* * * * *

It was a soft September day, and the foliage in the parks was just beginning to thin out and look pale in the warm sunlight, when Dr. Peters, crossing Washington Square, found Father Dubé sitting on a bench, with a smile on his round face as he watched a small flock of brown birds hopping and tumbling about a crust of bread.

"Hello, Dubé!" he hailed his friend, "I didn't know you ever loafed."

"But I do," said the priest, his smile growing kinder, though it was not a cheerful smile, "I am capable not only of loafing, but of idle thoughts. I have been wishing that I were a sparrow."

"I don't wish you were a sparrow," rejoined the Doctor, sitting down on the bench beside him, "for I want to ask your advice, and I'm not asking advice of sparrows."

"I am not a sparrow," said Father Dubé, his smile fading out; "I am a priest, and I will give advice to any one who wants it. That is what I am here for. Sometimes I think that it is all I am good for."

"I hope you are good for my case," the Doctor began; and he went on to tell the story of his

perplexity and his audacious attempt to solve the problem for himself.

"I don't know just what I want you to say," he concluded, "and I don't suppose there's anything you *can* say, but one thing. But if you've got any light on the subject, I wish you'd shed it for the benefit of a humble heretic. You and I don't talk quite the same language; but I guess you can sort of make signs that I can understand."

Father Dubé clasped one knee with his locked hands, and looked hard at the sparrows. There was a shade of depression on his face, and he spoke slowly and in a tone of sad gentleness.

"I suppose you think you know what I will say. Eh? That is it? 'Make her a Catholic.' Well, no, I do not say it."

He paused for a moment.

"You cannot make her a good Catholic, while she is under your influence; while she believes in you. You can not make her a member of the Church of England. You know it. It is impossible. You can make her go to the altar, and say her prayers—but you know that that is not religion, if her heart is not there. For an intelligent person, that is worse than no religion at all. The worst enemy of the Church is he who kisses the cross and doubts in his heart."

The priest's tone was stern, almost severe; but it changed to genial tenderness as he turned to the Doctor and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"It is God who makes Catholics—it is not Dr. Peters or Father Dubé. Leave it to Him. Perhaps you do not believe in Him? I do not know. I have known you many years; but I do not know your thoughts. I know your heart, however; and what you have told me—that is all right. Go on—teach her what you know—make her a good woman. That is all you can do. Do not try to do more. You will not do it well."

He rose, and clasping his hands behind him spoke with suppressed excitement.

"My friend, it is not every one who shall say to himself: 'I shall serve.' Look at me. I am sixty years old, and I am a mistake." He looked Dr. Peters straight in the eye. "When I was young, I thought I had a vocation for the priesthood. I was full of enthusiasm. I had read of the martyrs, of the soldiers of the Church. I said: I too, I will serve her. Well—it is now forty years, and I know that I had no vocation. I had only ambition. I am of a nature that is not fit for a priest. I love my ease, I indulge myself. I am tired. I could not be tired if I had been called to my work. Look you, Peters—me, a priest of God—it is distasteful to me to go among these poor and ignorant—my heart is not in my work."

"You manage to control your distaste pretty well," said the Doctor, warmly. "Don't talk in

that way about yourself. I know what you do for those people."

"I do my work; but another would do it better. They like me, yes; because I am easy with them. They know I have not the heart to be stern. They can put me off with any story. Anything is good enough for old Dubé. It is not men like me who represent the dignity and authority of the Church. There is Father Quinlan"—he pointed across the square—"they respect *him*."

Quinlan was the priest of a neighboring parish.

"Quinlan's a brute, begging his pardon," said the Doctor.

"But they fear him, they respect him," repeated the old man, stubbornly. He was silent for a moment, and then he broke forth again, with uncontrollable vehemence.

"I am a soldier of the Church—yes. But what am I for a soldier? I am a sentinel—put out far in the forest. What do I see of Her victories, of Her grandeur, of Her glory? What have I done for Her?"

His kind old face was drawn with lines of pain. He looked upward, as if for some answer from the skies. After a moment, he came to himself with a heavy sigh.

"This is all wrong, of course," he said. "You wonder that I should speak so to you—to you who are not of the Church. Well, you can

understand me better than some who are of the Church. I have done wrong, however. And you came to ask me for advice. Well, I have given it. Good-bye, my friend."

He stalked solemnly away, his head bent, his hands clasped behind him; the autumn sunlight falling on him as he walked down the avenue of trees.

When the Doctor reached home, the Midge was at the sitting-room window.

"I saw you and Father Dubé in the square," she observed: "you were talking a great deal. What was it about?"

"Oh, all sorts of things, Midge," he replied: "vocation, and religion, and human error, and various things."

The Midge meditated briefly.

"Ev-ert," she said, "if you want me to, I will be a Catholic. But it is a nonsense."

"I don't think it's necessary, my dear."

"Well, what do you want that I shall be, then?"

The Doctor crossed the room, and, taking her face between his hands, lifted it up, so that he could look into her eyes. Then he asked:

"Midge, do you love me?"

"You know I do!" she answered, opening her eyes.

"Right clean through, honest and true?"

"Why, Ev-ert—you *know* Yes."

"And you're going to be a good girl?"
"Yes," she assented, in opened-eyed wonder.
The Doctor looked at her long and earnestly.
"Well," he said at last, "I guess you are."

CHAPTER X.

THE fall went, and winter came, and December, and it was a year since the Midge had entered the apartments of Dr. Peters. Then another year went by, and another, and a fourth Christmas came. Late on Christmas Eve he slipped a gold watch and a huge package of candy into her slim, blue stocking, that swung from the sitting-room mantle. He scowled as he tried to think that he and the Midge were three years older.

"Ain't either," he soliloquized; "not so far as I'm concerned. I'm three years younger, if I'm anything."

But he glanced ruefully at the long stocking. "*She* grows," he thought.

Their life was so regular and uneventful that they marked the movement of time only by the record of the calendar—the annual holidays and the changes of the seasons. Yet the Midge was undoubtedly growing. She now wrote and spelled French and English so well that she could never have passed for a girl educated in a fashionable school. She had begun to make obscure refer-

ences to a serious and impending future of "long dresses." Her hair no longer hung down her neck. It was braided into two neat tails, which were spliced together with effective ribbons, and these tails displayed a tendency to crawl up into a coil on the back of her head. Once or twice, even, the coil had given place to a loose knot. But the appearances of the knot were only tentative, so far.

Her education was getting to that dangerous point of ambitious beginning when young ladies' educations are generally "finished." She was studying painting and music. It was good old Parker Prout who taught her the art of Nassau Street. Somebody once said of Parker Prout that he succeeded as a teacher because he also served his pupils as an Awful Example. Prout came twice a week, and, under his tuition, the Midge learned to paint water-colors, touching in their simplicity of composition and their free use of the primary colors. Her skies were blue, her trees were green and her sun was yellow when it was not red; and you could always tell just where one thing left off and another began, in her pictures. She was very well satisfied with them, and so was the Doctor. He said they indicated the possession of a cheerful disposition.

Other twice a week came Professor Max Mannheim, who tortured himself into paroxysms

of harmless rage in trying to teach her to play the piano.

"Du lieber Gott in Himmel!" he would shriek: "Iss dot a chordt off A? W'at shall you do if you shall not *sink?* I do not esk zet you hef fing-erss—I do not esk zet you hef armss—I do not esk zet you hef hentss—bot play mit ze kray metter off your prain—only once! La, la, la!"—with a staccato hammering of three of the piano keys, as though he had the obstinate gray matter of the Midge's brain under his wiry fingers. The Midge, herself, merely smiled on him in amiable calm, either recognizing in all this a form of vehement patience, or accepting it as something inseparable from the inculcation of the art of music. After the hour of turmoil was over, they were good friends, and the Professor frequently took her to afternoon concerts, where Dr. Peters could not have been dragged with ox-chains. She liked the concerts fairly well, especially when they ran to what the Professor called the "tresh" of Strauss and Waldteufel and Abt.

In these three years the Midge had become a sturdy young thing, not tall—that she never would be—but plump and mature of figure for a girl in her sixteenth year. Nor did her water-colors belie her disposition, for she was cheerful and contented, and her youthful vivacity was apparently undimmed by any consciousness that

she had no friends or associates under forty years of age.

It was in the fourth spring of her stay that the Doctor noted a puzzling change in her. She began to moult, as he put it. Her health was excellent; but there was a marked diminution in her usually large fund of energy and enthusiasm. She seemed to lose her interest in their long walks, and in their Sunday rambles. She preferred to sit at home and read, or at least she said she did. After a while he noticed that when she had a book in her hand she was not always reading.

The Doctor's affectionate diagnosis of the case was wholly unsatisfactory. He felt that she had something on her mind; but delicate questioning and gentle overtures to confidential communion brought him no nearer to finding out what the something was. As time went on, she became fickle of mood. Sometimes she fairly purred in kitten-like felicity. And the next day she would "moult" again. "I know the world is hollow," thought the Doctor, "but she can't have found it out yet. That comes later."

One day he found her crying, and he demanded an explanation. She gave him none, but slipped silently out of his grasp and went into her own room. It was the first time that she had ever been anything but gentle and submissive to him. He refrained from following her; but he made

up his mind that radical remedial measures were in order; and in a manner it eased his mind to reflect that the extravagance of this manifestation made it almost certain that there was a physical cause for her morbid state of mind. "Malaria, I believe," he pondered: "I suppose that means moving up town. Something's got to be done, and right now. She'd never act in that way if she wasn't sick. Malaria, for certain. I presume I'd have had it, living in this region, if I ever had anything—except an appetite."

But he had a greater shock before him than the discovery of malaria. An hour later the Midge came gravely and sadly from her room and stood in front of him, lifting a face painfully set and old for a child of sixteen.

"I am sorry I went away from you like that," she said, gently. "I did not mean to be—not nice. But I was feeling very badly. I was making up my mind."

"Making up your mind?" he repeated, smiling.

"Yes. I want to go away."

"To go away! Where?"

She stood with her hands hanging down by her sides, and her figure drooped as though she were tired.

"I do not know. That we must find out. Some place—some asylum, or some place where I can do some work."

"Midge!" the Doctor cried, "what do you mean?"

She threw up her hands with a nervous gesture and drew a quick breath of pain.

"No, I know what you will say! But I can not stay here more. I know it—I did not know it once; but I know it now—it is all wrong. I have no right to be here. I am no relation to you—I am nobody at all. You have just found me, and I have made you take care of me because you are too good to send me away. I have been selfish, and I have taken it all; but I knew not better when I came here. I was ignorant. Now I know, and I will be selfish no longer. I will go away—no! no!—you shall not tell me to stay. It is not right that I stay. You must let me go!"

The Doctor had a fleeting vision of the room as it had looked on the night when the Midge first entered it, and of the pitiful little form in the long black waterproof. It gave him a shock to connect that picture with the girl who stood now on nearly the same spot. He reached out and put his hands on her shoulders, though at first she shrank a little from his grasp.

"Midge," he said, holding her firmly and speaking with slow decision, "you can go away if you want to. If you are tired of living here—"

"Ah! no."

"If you feel that you have got to go, I won't hinder you. You can do as you please."

Her lips closed tightly, and her face grew whiter.

"But, look here! I want you to understand one thing. You may go—but if you go, I go too. Do you understand that? Wherever you go, I'm going too—see?"

A queer little cry came from her. It was almost joyous, yet it seemed to have a sob behind it.

"My dear child," he went on, holding her tighter as again she shrunk away, "let's settle this thing once for all. You don't appear to know that you're talking right down wickedly. What's the use of telling me that you don't belong to me? You do! What would I do without you? I couldn't get along—you ought to know that. You aren't under any obligations to me—I'm under obligations to you. That's the way it stands. Now, just look at the matter reasonably. I'm an old man—"

"You are not an old man!" she broke in; "I will not have you call yourself an old man. You are forty-four years and seven months old. That is not old! That is nothing."

"It's something, my dear," he said, staring into vacancy over her head. "I'm too old to make new friends. Now, you're my best friend. You aren't any relation of mine—that's true. But you're a good deal more to me than any relation I ever had, and I'm going to hang on to you and

keep you and *own* you, do you grasp that fact? So don't you ever talk again about leaving me, unless you want to make me talk to you pretty seriously. You hear that?"

She heard it in silence. He took her on his lap and set to work to reason it out. He told her that he had no kindred who had claims upon him, that he was free to do as he liked with his own, that his income, though it was not extravagantly large, was more than he could ever spend upon himself—more than sufficient for both of them. She listened, and yielded gently, almost wearily. There was a trace of something like humiliation in her manner, however, as she sat with bowed head and heard him patiently. But in the end she gave the promise he required of her, never to mention the subject again, and to put the thought out of her mind, as far as possible.

When this was done, and the Doctor's mind was relieved, he wanted to go on with a few further comments and reflections, gathering up the loose ends of their talk; but she showed a distinct desire to close the conversation, and left her place upon his knee to prepare the table for dinner, for the afternoon was passing into evening.

Afterward she went to her room. She always made some pleasing and significant change in her attire for the evening meal. The Doctor was

striding up and down the room, after his fashion, when she suddenly emerged. Her listless fatigued manner had gone; she was tremulous, tearful and excited, and she threw herself upon him, binding him in her arms with a violent eagerness.

"I have been wrong," she cried; "yes, I have been wrong to you. I have been ungrateful, and I have pained you. I did not mean it. I do not want to go away from you. I will never go away from you unless you want me to. You have not understood me. I have been wrong; but you have not understood me. I only mean to do what you would have me. Yes, I do belong to you, Evert, I will do whatever you say, now and always. If you ever say to me go, I will go; and if you say to me stay, I will stay. I want you to hear me, Evert. Always, always, always! I will do just what you say. Always I will do just what you want. You can tell me nothing that I will not do—and I will be glad, if you say it. Do you know that, Evert?"

She trembled convulsively as she clung to him. He saw that she was agitated beyond the limit of her childish strength, and he soothed her with all possible gentleness, until the wild excitement gave place to unnerved exhaustion, and she let herself be petted and caressed like a baby.

He scarcely understood it all; but he made certain that she needed fatherly care and tonic medicines, and for weeks thereafter she had both,

administered to the best of his ability. It was some time before the treatment showed good effects; but by midsummer he saw with pride that she had been brought back to sanity, and he discontinued the use of the tonic medicines; though he relaxed nothing in his fatherly care.

They went out of town a good deal during the summer, making little trips to the Catskills and to the Jersey coast, spending a few days at a time in these airings. He did not feel that he could afford to give more, for he had got to work upon the sewing-machine improvement; and, besides, he was always needed in the quarter—although he was not called upon so often as he had been in earlier days. There seemed to be a general understanding among the poor people that he was now a man of family, and that his time was no longer wholly at their service. Yet he went among them often, and sometimes, now, the Midge went with him, and she showed a creditable readiness and intelligence as a nurse.

* * * * *

They had a way of dining out, once in a while, to break the monotony of a long succession of household repasts. One fine day in November, Élise wanted to go to Hoboken, to the christening of her cousin's ninth child, and they were glad to let her off, and to avail themselves of the excuse to go forth and take their dinner in a restaurant.

It was a true day of Indian Summer—summer surely enough, although its radiance rested on bare trees and grass out of which the life had faded; and though the cool blue of the higher sky, and the soft haze on the horizon, seen down the long vista of the city street, gave no suggestion of summer's sensuous languors.

The day before, the Midge had celebrated her sixteenth birthday, and they agreed to regard this dinner as an extension and continuation of the celebration.

It was a modest feast—only a plain *table-d'hôte* dinner, eaten in the heart of the quarter, at a cost of half-a-dollar apiece. They had tried more elaborate dinners, at the great hotels uptown; but they preferred the simpler joys of Charlemagne's restaurant. They both possessed that element of Bohemianism which belongs to all good fellows—the Midge was a good fellow, as well as the Doctor.

Charlemagne's is a thing of the past; but he was a jolly king of cheap eating-house keepers while he lasted. He gave a grand and wholesome dinner for fifty cents. The first items were the *pot-au-feu* and *bouilli*. If the *pot-au-feu* was thin, the *bouilli* was so much the richer. And if the *bouilli* was something woodeny, why, you had had all the better *pot-au-feu* before it. Then came an *entrée*—calves' brains, perhaps, or the like; a *rôti*, a vegetable or so coming with it; a good

salad, chiccory or lettuce or plantain, a dessert of timely fruits, a choice of excellent cheese, and a cup of honest black coffee. And with all this you got bread *ad libitum* and a half bottle of drinkable wine, that had never paid duty, for it came from California, though it called itself Bordeaux. And if you were inclined to extravagant luxury, you might respond to the invitation of the small placards on the wall, and "Ask for the Little Pot." And, having asked for the little pot, you got a tiny china cup, shaped like a pipkin, which held two or three brandied cherries, steeping in their luscious juice. It cost you ten cents more, and it gave a dollar's worth of flavor to your *demi-tasse* of coffee.

It was not aristocratic, M. Charlemagne's little place in Houston Street; the table-cloths were coarser than the wrappings of Egyptian mummies; there was little to show that the spoons and forks had ever been plated; there was no ceremony among the diners, and shirt-sleeves were always *en règle*. And the great bowl of soup was passed around that every guest might help himself, much as it might have been done in the time of the proprietor's namesake. But everything was clean, and all things were decent and well-ordered within that respectable resort. Poor French clerks and saving French tradesmen mostly frequented it. Now and then there was a table-full of newspaper men, actors, artists and

unclassified Bohemians, who atoned for their uncontrollable noisiness by amusing all the graver patrons of the house with their ready mirth and ephemeral wit, always generously loud enough to be at the service of the whole room.

Madame Charlemagne, holding the *pot-au-feu* breast-high, hailed the Doctor and the Midge as they entered, and called upon M. Charlemagne to find seats for them.

M. Charlemagne, rotund and jovial, with the air of a comic cook in an opéra bouffe, showed them to the little table between the fire-place and the window.

There was one other person already at the table—a young man. Looking up after his soup, it struck the Doctor that he had seen the young man before, somewhere. He had only a vague sense of knowing the broad shoulders, the bright young face and the moustache that was still as small as anything can be that has a right to be called a moustache. The young man, with the color of confusion in his cheeks, directed toward the Doctor a smile of recognition and toward the Doctor's companion a look of awkward apology. Dr. Peters felt sure he had seen him before. He would have contented himself with a nod in acknowledgment; but the ingenuous embarrassment in the young face appealed to his sympathy.

"I think I've met you before—" he began, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, in—that is, I think so—don't you remember? One afternoon, two or three years ago—you were buying French books—for a young lady." He added this last clause with impulsive eagerness, and then blushed furiously.

"Oh, yes," said the Doctor, "I remember, I remember now. In the navy, eh? But your name has slipped me."

"Hathaway," returned the young man, promptly; "Paul Hathaway. That was just before I sailed for South America. We had quite a talk together, don't you recollect."

"Why, yes," said the Doctor, beginning to recall some of the results of that talk, in the way of purchase of French literature.

"I hope," the young man boldly pushed on, "I hope you liked the books you bought. Were they what you wanted?"

He glanced furtively at the Midge, who was eating her *bouilli* very daintily, and utterly ignoring his presence.

"Well, no," the Doctor responded, slowly, a smile curling the corners of his mouth; "I can't just say they were, exactly—not all of them."

"Weren't they—weren't they satisfactory to the young lady?"

He was fiery red in the face with this; but the Doctor did not notice it, seemingly. His smile of amusement grew broader.

"I don't know about that," he said; "I didn't hear her say anything much about them—but maybe she can tell you better for herself. This is the young lady."

He indicated the Midge. It was rather comic to him to think that the child for whom he had bought novels three years before, was now so near to being indeed a young lady. He saw that he must introduce Mr. Hathaway to the Midge, and he smiled again as he fitted her rarely-used patronymic to his simple formula of introduction.

"Mr.—Mr.—Hathaway, isn't it?—this is Miss Talbot, who wanted the books."

It amused him to think of the Midge as Miss Talbot. But if he took the formality somewhat lightly, the Midge made up for it by the dignity with which she received the intimation of Mr. Hathaway's existence. She smiled condescendingly, as she ate her *bouilli*, and listened to the young man's remarks on French literature.

Mr. Hathaway was frankly talkative. From French literature he skipped to talking about himself, and he had much interesting information to impart concerning his three years' cruise in the tropics. He had been at Valparaiso a long time, and he described Valparaiso with enthusiastic admiration. Valparaiso led him to talk about Paris, and that brought the Midge out, and the Doctor was able to withdraw from the

conversation and devote himself to his dinner, while the younger people chatted of Europe and European ways. To hear the Midge talk, you would have thought that she had been a fashionable tourist with many years' experience of the Continent.

Incidentally, it came out that Mr. Hathaway was at home on sick leave. He had been hurt in the course of some gun-practice at Newport, early that summer. The Midge had thawed, by this time, and she gave his sufferings the tribute of a dainty little "Oh!"—which expression of sympathy he manfully disclaimed. He had not been hurt much, he explained; it was really nothing at all—only a game leg for a few weeks—and he was all right now. Oh, yes, he was all right—only the day before yesterday he had taken a twenty mile walk, to get a little sketching, along the Bronx.

The Midge called the Doctor's attention to this fact. They, too, had recently been wandering along the tortuous course of the river Bronx. It was an interesting coincidence. And she also told the Doctor that Mr. Hathaway had been engaged in gun-practice. She drew his notice to this with a proud sense of safety, for she knew that he was wholly weaned from his old schemes of bloodthirsty invention.

Dr. Peters heard her remarks rather absent-mindedly. He had been thinking while the

other two talked. He thought that Mr. Hathaway was a very kindly young man, to be willing to spend so much time on a child. And he saw that the Midge was enjoying the conversation. She was positively vivacious—brighter than he had seen her in some time. She had never quite recovered her high spirits since her sickness in the spring. Now her eyes sparkled, and she ran on so fluently that he was afraid she would bore her new acquaintance. It struck him, for the first time, that she did not see enough of young people. Hathaway, of course, was too old for her; but if he was considerate enough to talk with her, and if it did her good,—why, where would be the harm in asking him to come and see them, once in a while? It would be a change for the Midge—perhaps for him, too.

He asked Mr. Hathaway to call. Mr. Hathaway said he would, and when they left the restaurant, he walked with them to their door, so that he might not forget their number.

Two days later, he called. He made himself very entertaining, and when he told of his long and lonely sketching-tramps, the Doctor invited him to join their expedition for the next Sunday. He accepted the invitation with agreeable readiness.

After he had gone, the Doctor felt that his act had been somewhat too impulsive.

"I ought to have asked you first, Midge,

whether you wanted to have him go. I was rather thoughtless, I guess. How do you feel about it? I won't do it again unless you say so."

The Midge raised her eyebrows and let them fall in a doubtful frown.

"Just you and I—that is what I like best, Evert. But if you think he will be pleasant—it is for you to say. You like him?—you think he is nice?"

"Why, yes; he seems a straightforward, honest sort of fellow. Don't you think so?"

"I do not know." She shrugged her shoulders as she looked in the glass and adjusted her hair. "It is too soon to say."

The next Sunday was fine, and they went to Fort Hamilton, the three of them. Down there, the sea breezes had kept the grass green, and had left a few leaves on the trees. They wandered along the bluff, and admired the English beauty of Clifton spire, nestling against the Staten Island hills opposite. They went up to the Fort, and saw the place where the Doctor's gun had been tried; and the Doctor told the story of the failure, with humor chastened by retrospection. Mr. Hathaway informed them as to the rig of the craft at anchor in the Narrows and up the bay, and spoke of foreign ports which he had seen. They had a good early dinner, which they ate in a jovial frame of mind,

at the queer old half-inn half-boarding-house under the bluff; and a little before seven o'clock they took the rattling, swaying dummy for Brooklyn, and were at home in gas-lit New York just as the church bells began to ring for evening service.

"Well, Midge," said the Doctor, later in the evening, "how was it? Shall I ask him again?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I do not want to say, Evert. You must do as you please. It is nothing to me. But you have not said anything about my hair."

"What do you want me to say about your hair? Your hair's all right—oh, I see! What has become of the pig-tails?"

"They are not the fashion now. Don't you think this way is more pretty?"

CHAPTER XI.

IF it had been left to the Doctor to say whether or no Mr. Paul Hathaway should be encouraged to continue his visits, the chilly indifference displayed by the Midge might have settled the question in the negative. But it was not left to the Doctor. Mr. Hathaway took the matter into his own hands. He had received one invitation, and he needed no more. He simply came, and continued to come, and as he was thoroughly agreeable, and as they always enjoyed his visits, there seemed to be no reason why he should do otherwise.

The exigencies of social intercourse demand that we should know who our friends are, and whence they come. Mr. Hathaway supplied all the necessary data in his case. He was frank and open, and when he talked about himself, it was with the indifferent ease with which he might have discoursed on the peculiarities of the port of Rio Janeiro. He was the son of a Pennsylvania clergyman, who had been also a school teacher. His parents were dead, the old uncle who had brought him up was dead; he had

passed his boyhood on the school-ship, and he was now in the navy. That was all his story. As he put it, he was a regular out-and-out, thorough-going, plain, unvarnished waif. Nobody owned him, and nobody seemed anxious to take possession of him. He had no prospects of promotion in the navy, and he was as tired of it as a man could be at twenty-three. He had wanted to exchange into the army, because there he would have more leisure, and more time for sketching. Sketching was about the best fun he knew. Of course, he couldn't really do anything at it; but, still, it was fun. Only he saw no prospect of getting into the army. Lieutenant-cies were not lying around loose. He supposed he would have to go back to the *Wequetequock*, when his sick leave expired. And perhaps it was all he was good for, after all. Certainly the Peters household would be tired of him by that time. Oh, it was very kind of them to say that they wouldn't; but they hadn't tried it yet. They would have two months more of him.

In the first of their acquaintance, when he heard that the Midge painted in water-colors, he had promised to bring his sketches around to show her. On his first visit she exhibited her own works, and reminded him of his promise; but somehow or other, from day to day he forgot to produce the pictures. It was only on the friendly insistence of the Doctor that he finally

brought a package of sketches for their inspection. And immediately afterward the Midge's portfolio disappeared from the sitting-room.

Mr. Hathaway's modesty had over-served him in this instance. He drew uncommonly well, and his work had that quality of confidence and spirit which picture dealers and some art-critics call *chic*. The next afternoon that he looked in at the Peters establishment—he had got to "looking in" by this time—the Midge was painting, and much to his embarrassment, and against his will, he found himself gently but firmly placed in the position of a superior critic and adviser—a sort of amateur teacher, in fact.

This initial introduction of a visitor into the family accomplished itself without friction and with pleasant results. The Doctor saw that their previous "twofold solitude" had been a mistake. He began to ask people to come to see them. He knew but few who were desirable as familiar associates, and they were none of them very young or very entertaining; but he did his best with these few. He got Parker Prout and Professor Mannheim to drop in of an evening, and when they took kindly to the idea, as they did after a first trial, he was surprised to see how much more there was in them than came out in their professional hours, or even in their time of recreation at the Brasserie Pigault, where he had first met them. Father Dubé, too, was

willing to give them an evening from time to time, and he taught the Midge to play dominos. The Doctor seriously reproached himself that he had not thought to instruct her in that innocent and mildly exciting game. But then it seemed to him that he had neglected the Midge in various ways. There were possibilities in life with which he had done nothing to make her familiar. He had not noticed her growth, or the fact that his own world was somewhat narrow for her.

This was borne in upon Dr. Peters when the Reverend Mr. Pratt loomed up as one of the possibilities of life. He was invited one night to play whist with Parker Prout, Professor Mannheim and the Doctor. The Midge abhorred whist, and so Paul Hathaway kept her company in a far corner while the game went on. Mr. Pratt played whist, not because he liked it, but because he considered it one of the approved and accepted forms of amusement which it was his duty, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to encourage. He passed a jovial evening, for him. He drank a glass of sherry and ginger-ale; although, as he observed, the use of strong liquor did not agree with him.

Presumably, however, he did not suffer from remorse or indigestion on the morrow, for he began to pay frequent calls, and showed an amiable interest in the welfare of Dr. Peters and Miss Talbot.

"Miss Talbot" she did not long remain to any of the little group. Her father's name had long been unfamiliar to her own ears, and she did not seem inclined to insist upon her right to it. The Doctor and Prout called her "Midge"; Mannheim hailed her as "Mitsh," which was as near as he could come to it; and the two younger men had to find more suitably respectful modes of address. Mr. Pratt selected "Miss Lodoiska," without sparing one syllable, and Hathaway called her "Miss Lois." This was a bold and original device, and he had the name to himself.

From the time that he first heard her called "Miss Lodoiska," the Doctor became conscious of a new discomfort. He had to recognize not only the fact that she *was* "Miss" Lodoiska, but the fact that others recognized that fact.

The Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt recognized it. Before he had been long a visitor in that top floor on Washington Square, he became aware, to some extent, of the deficiencies in her religious education. He never grasped the whole hideous truth, but he learned enough to make him deeply concerned for her. He tried to get her to teach a class in the Sunday-school, by way of making up for what she herself should have been taught, and, failing in this, he asked her to read a few books which he desired to select for her. She did not refuse, and he brought the books, and came from time to time

to talk over them with her. He did nearly all the talking himself; but then his opinions were unimpeachably correct.

If it had begun and ended with the books, the Doctor would have been well pleased. But the books were only a small part of it. Mr. Pratt's communications stretched out into expansions of personality, and confidences. He told the Midge of his private hopes and ambitions. He told her of his early life in a small Ohio village, of the struggles of his youth, of the sacrifices which his mother had made to send him to college, of the pride with which she looked upon his present position. And, worst of all, he told Miss Lodoiska of his first and only love-affair and its unfortunate ending.

The Doctor knew more or less of this, and he was displeased and disturbed. He thought that Pratt was very wrong to talk so to a girl of the Midge's age. For, even if she was not quite a child—and he was willing to admit that she had got beyond the point where she could be called a child and nothing more—she was certainly not old enough for that sort of thing. Pratt was old enough, himself, to know better. And he was young enough to make his indiscretion possibly dangerous. And the Doctor was displeased with the Midge for listening to such talk. Why she wanted to listen to Pratt at all he could not understand. But she certainly did listen.

The Doctor knew little of social diplomacy. He had tact and delicacy in dealing with the poor and miserable; but he felt himself at a loss in a matter like this. He gave Mr. Pratt two or three hints so broad that no man free from an absolutely guilty conscience could have understood them; and he made some disparaging remarks about Pratt to the Midge. These she received in silence, which was the only way in which she ever expressed disapproval of anything he did. This annoyed and perplexed him more than he would have been willing to confess to himself. And so it came about that there grew up a misunderstanding—undefined, unavowed; but a misunderstanding—between himself and her; and their life was not just what it had been before.

The Doctor was greatly relieved when he learned that Mr. Pratt was about to leave New York. There was to be a change in the management of the mission. Mr. Pratt's charge had been only temporary in its nature, though he had held it for some years; and he had not been successful in his labors. The trustees were dissatisfied, and he himself felt that he was out of place. So he had accepted a call to a church in Ohio, near his native place. He was very thankful for the call, and very glad of the prospect of having a church of his own. And he could see his mother, from time to time, by driving twenty-five miles. He never thought to inquire whether the dissatis-

faction of the trustees of the mission had anything to do with the procurement of the call. He only knew that he was called to a field of labor for which he felt himself better suited.

He came one afternoon to bid the Midge good-bye. He brought her several books which he wanted her to read. He spoke of his prospects and of what he hoped to accomplish. He told her he wished he had been able to be of more service to her, as a spiritual guide, than he had been, and when he rose to go he stood for a moment or two limply shaking her hand.

"I suppose," he said, "it doesn't seem very attractive to you, the idea of living in a little country village, away out in Ohio?"

"No," she answered, frankly, "it must be a bore. I hope you will like it better than I should. It must be a great bore."

"There is so much to be done," he said.

"Well, I hope you will do it. It is nice of you to go, you know. Yes," she added, reflectively, "I am sure it is nice of you to go."

He looked hard at her, and then turned away, and, saying "Good-bye," went down the stairs. He was a poor little fellow, poor of intellect, poor of soul; but he was man enough to read and respect the high unconsciousness of her maiden eyes.

* * * * *

When the Doctor came home that evening—he had been out buying tools for his sewing-

machine model-making—the Midge greeted him with a rapturous smile, such as she had not given him in weeks.

"Oh, Evert," she said, "Mr. Pratt has gone."

"Well?" returned the Doctor, rather unsympathetically.

"I'm so glad!"

"You're *glad?*"

"Why, of course."

"Well, I don't precisely see why 'of course.' I thought you had been pretty thick of late, you two."

"Oh, I had to be polite to him, you know. I did dislike him so."

"Your logic beats *me*, Midge," said the Doctor, with an uneasy smile. "If you didn't like him, why didn't you show it?"

"Don't you understand?" she asked, looking at him in mild surprise. "I did not want to be unjust, any more than you would."

The Doctor pondered.

"Well, I suppose there is something in that."

"Of course—don't you see? And he would come to me and tell me all about his mother, and how she has had meat only once a week, so that he might go to college and be a clergyman. And I was very sorry for his mother, and it was very nice of her—but you have no idea, Evert, how he has bored me."

The Doctor's brows were wrinkled.

"I thought you were interested in his conversation."

"Interested! But it was a bore—oh, a *bore*."

"You managed to conceal it pretty well," he observed, grimly.

She gave him a surprised look, and then her face changed. She went swiftly to him and touched him on the shoulder. He had been looking gloomily out of the window, and he turned toward her.

"Evert! you have not thought—I *liked* that man?"

"Why," he began, uncomfortably, "I thought you seemed to have taken a sort of a fancy to his society—"

"Oh, Evert!"

"I'm not finding fault, my dear. You've a right to choose your own friends, and—"

"But I could never have him for a *friend!* How could you have thought that? Why, Evert, he was not *nice* at all. You did not like him yourself, did you?"

"I didn't like him—no, not exactly. I won't say I disliked him, though. He was a good enough little fellow, I suppose."

"Good! I am not so sure he was good. That is as you look at it. I should not want to have you *good* like that. Why, Evert, do you know? he was engaged to a girl out there, and when he found that if he married her he could not afford

to study and be a clergyman, he has gone to her and broken it off. What do you think of that?"

The Doctor smiled with more mirthfulness than before.

"That's his own business, my dear—his and the young woman's."

"But he has gone to her and told her about it, and how he had to choose between her and being a clergyman, and they have prayed together, and he has made her think the way he did, and she has let him go. For me, I think it was a shame. I think it was cruel—and I have told him so."

The Doctor laughed outright this time.

"Well, just there I think you exceeded your duty, Midge. That was a question of morals that it isn't for us to pass on. And it seems that the young woman consented."

"That was because she was a woman. But she was not young. She was thirty."

"Then she was old enough to know her own mind."

"But would *you* have done such a thing?" demanded the Midge, indignantly: "would you give up a woman you have loved, for anything —for anything in the world? I think it is wicked!"

"I'm not speaking for myself, Midge. But I'm not running Mr. Pratt's conscience. I dare

say he thought it was right, or he wouldn't have done it."

"He thought it was right—maybe. But he ought not to have thought it was right. You know it was wrong, Evert; and you would never have told me to do such a thing. Only you are so good to other people, you will never say they are wrong. But now do you see why I disliked him?"

"You don't seem to have approved of him, for a fact," said the Doctor, putting his arm around her.

"And don't you see why I had to be nice to him? For he thought he was right, and that was what made it so—disgusting. Don't you understand why I let him talk to me, Evert?" she pressed, nestling up to him.

"Because you are a woman?" suggested the Doctor, laughing.

"Ah, now you are making fun of me," she said, smiling, herself, as she slipped out of his arm. "And I have to set the table for dinner. See—it is ten minutes of six. You must go and get yourself ready; and I have not changed my dress. Only do not ever tell me again that he could be my *friend*."

CHAPTER XII.

THE January wind blew in through the open front door of the old house on Washington Square, and brought a smell of cooking up to Doctor Peters's top floor, one morning shortly after New Year's. Most of the smell proceeded from the lower regions; but some of it was an importation, a separate smell hanging around a tonsled, smudgy, hunted-looking little boy, who did not need a label to tell the experienced eye that he was the male "slavey" of a New York boarding-house of the third or fourth class. It is not every cheap boarding-house that has such an attendant on its domestic staff; but those that do keep him use him as boots, scullion, errand-boy, and in several other capacities, and he is just such a soiled and harried creature as stood before Dr. Peters that sharp morning, rubbing his blue nose with the sleeve of his thin jacket.

"The gen'l'm'n said to give it to you very pertickler," he said, in one breath.

The note which he handed to the Doctor read thus:

"DEAR DR. PETERS—Can I see you at once, and privately? I am in no end of trouble. I will meet you anywhere you say—but I don't want to have *any one* know it.

"In haste, yours,

"PAUL HATHAWAY."

The Doctor sent a line in reply: "Come here in half-an-hour—we shall be alone," and the boy went down stairs three steps at a time tossing a coin into the air and singing a pæan of his own to an air of the day:

"O-o-oh! dat dime he gimme,
O-o-oh! dat dime he gimme,
Good old chump wid a mustash on—
Golden slippers in de mawn!"

The Doctor listened, smiled, half-sighed, and smiled again. Then he turned from the door, and faced the Midge, dressed to go out for her household shopping. She had long been considered "equal to the exigencies of the situation."

She was very pretty to look at, and rather patrician, in her way, as she stood, erect and graceful, in her trim seal-skin sacque, a neat, Frenchy bonnet on her small, shapely, well-poised head.

"I shall not be long, Evert," she said.

"Well," he suggested, "you needn't hurry home this morning."

She showed her white, even little teeth in a mischievous smile.

"Oh, you are tired of my society!"

"Not exactly tired, Midge—only a little fatigued, so to speak. No, dear—there's somebody coming here on business. And if you want to take the opportunity to call on your dressmaker and see if there aren't some new duds that you absolutely don't need—why, you've got a good excuse."

"Ah, no!" she persisted, maliciously: "You cannot deceive me. You want to get rid of me. Very well, I will stay out until you are anxious to have me back, and put an advertisement in the papers—'Midge: Return to your penitent Evert. I will never turn you out again—E. P.'"

As might have been expected, to a young woman of the Midge's sense of humor, the "personal" column of a well-known morning paper had no terrors. She finished her imaginary quotation with a saucy, dainty nod and wink, and marched off to her shopping.

She had scarcely got out of the house when Hathaway entered. One glance told the Doctor that the "no end of trouble" was no exaggeration. The color had gone out of the handsome face, and the blue eyes were filled with the over-burdening, all-absorbing anxiety of the young spirit in its first encounter with misfortune, when the moment's cloud makes black the whole universe, and there never, no, never, was such another woe upon earth.

"What's the matter, Hathaway?"

"Everything's the matter!" said the young man, dropping into a chair; "I'm a scamp and a blackguard, and I'm being punished as I deserve. That's what's the matter."

"Oh, come, my boy—it's not so bad as all that."

"Yes, it is. I haven't the slightest claim on your sympathy, or—or—any one's sympathy. I don't know why I've got the audacity to come to you, and if you tell me that you can't help me—why, I'll admit it's all I'm worth."

"Well, well," said the Doctor, encouragingly, "let's have the whole damnation. What is it?"

Hathaway silently handed him a letter. It was written on thin paper, in a foreign hand, and dated from Valparaiso. The English was most un-English; but the meaning of the communication was clear. The Doctor read it through carefully.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the boy. He sat with his elbows on his knees, resting his forehead on his hands.

The Doctor shook his head, gave a long, low whistle of dismay, and walked to the window, where he stood for a minute staring vacantly out at the wind-swept square.

"Well," he said, at last, "you'd better tell me all about it."

"There isn't much to tell," Hathaway began, in a choking tone, as if it hurt him to talk. "We were at Valparaiso a good deal, off and on. We were up and down the coast all through those rows they had down there—it was two years ago, you know. And we got to going—a lot of us fellows—to this old man's house—this Garcia. We found out afterward that it was a regular gambling-place, in a shy sort of way, and he got about all the money we had—'twasn't much. And I got terribly gone on this girl—she was his eldest daughter, and she was handsome—beautiful—in that Southern way. I don't want to see anybody like her again, though. I was in love with her—or I thought I was—I don't know. I know I was a fool about it. The fellows all said so. And I suppose I did ask her to marry me—yes, I did—but that was only in the first of it, when I didn't know what sort of girl she was. Afterward — why, I never thought she'd dream of such a thing as holding me to it. I'd cut my throat before I'd think of it." He clinched his hands and fairly shuddered.

The Doctor looked over the letter again.

"Is it genuine, do you think, this business? Or is it blackmail?"

"I don't know," the young man groaned.

"What's the standing of the family?"

"It's hard to say. I don't know what to tell

you. They have been respectable, certainly—I guess they had a good deal of money once. The old man is nothing but a shark and a sharper now, and I suppose they're a pretty bad lot all around. But I can't go to work to prove *that*, you know."

"Let's see"—the Doctor referred once more to the letter: "when does he say he'll send his charges to Washington?"

"They must be there now. You see, he threatens to do it if he doesn't hear from me within two months. And it's dated in October. You see, he thought I was on the *Wequetequock*, at Rio, and she hasn't been at Rio. The accursed thing has lain there over one mail and then been forwarded. I got it last night."

"But you haven't heard from Washington?"

"I haven't yet; but I shall soon enough; and it will be the end of me, Doctor. They're lax enough about most things, in the navy; but that's the kind of thing they won't stand from a fellow in my position. They'll make an example of me, just as they did of Willy Blackford. Oh, it's a bad business, Doctor."

"Yes, it is," said Dr. Peters, laying his hand on the bowed shoulder; "but we must try to make the best of it. Come, look up and look it in the face."

Hathaway did look up, after a moment.

"By Jove, Doctor, you're a good man!"

"Never mind about that. Let's get at the facts in the case. I want to know all about it. How old was this—this friend of yours?"

"I don't know." A tinge of red came into his pale cheeks. "The boys said she was thirty; but I don't believe she was more than twenty-six or so."

"And you were—how old?"

"I was twenty-one the day we first got to Valparaiso."

"That's two years ago?"

"Yes."

"Why have they waited so long to follow you up?"

"I suppose they thought we were coming back. We went down the coast to look after some privateer, or something, and then we got orders to come home. I can't explain it."

"Looks crooked," said the Doctor, cheerfully.

He continued his examination, with encouraging results. Things began to look better, at least from the point of view of morality. Hathaway was frank and self-accusatory. He made no attempt to justify himself; and it was evident that he had done wrong. But it was also evident that it was the wrong-doing of an inexperienced, impulsive boy, under the influence of a woman much older than himself, and with whom he was foolishly in love. It seemed probable that he was the victim of a family conspiracy. He had

had, at the time, a few hundred dollars, a legacy from his uncle, and he had spent it all at Valparaiso. This might have given ground for a belief that he was wealthier than most of his set.

He was utterly penitent, humble and abashed; that was certain. It was not merely the fear of the consequences; the wound he had dealt his own honor and his own sense of self-respect seemed to trouble him more than anything else.

"It isn't the being discharged," he moaned. "I'm willing enough to get out of the service—but it's the going out in this awful way. Or, if I were accused falsely, I shouldn't mind it so much. But I feel so mean and degraded—I can't look *anybody* in the face."

"It's not so sure that you are going out of the service," Dr. Peters put in. "And you've got to look me in the face while we resolve ourselves into a committee on ways and means."

They began to talk of the possibilities of help to be got from Hathaway's superior officers. He had been something of a favorite on ship-board, he owned, with another blush.

"Captain Chester is as good an old boy as ever walked, and I know he'd give me a hand, if he could. But he got into trouble in Blackford's case, and I believe he got an awful wigging from General Beecham, and—"

"Beecham? General Beecham?" repeated the Doctor, "not Buel Beecham—? he's no sailor."

"That's the man. I know he's no sailor; but he's a grand mogul in the Navy department, all the same: and he sits up there at Washington and bullyrags old men who were in the service before he was born, and who have forgotten more about their business than he ever knew."

"Buel Beecham," said Dr. Peters, meditatively. "Buel Beecham—General Buel Beecham. You don't say so!"

"He's a terrible old martinet, you know. And they all ko-tow to him. It was he who said that Willy Blackford must be made an example of, and that he'd see that it was done. Oh, he'll look after *me*."

The Doctor crossed the room to the mantelpiece, filled his pipe, lit it, and smoked a good three minutes—three minutes is a long time—in solemn silence. Hathaway sat with his hands in his pockets, gazing into the fire, a heavy despair on his young face. There was no sound in the room, save the Midge's latest-adopted kitten, "scratching for luck" on the table leg. When she had scratched and stretched enough, she stole over to Hathaway, and rubbed against his feet. He looked down at her and stooped to caress her, and then suddenly drew back with a nervous start, sprang to his feet and stood irresolutely looking from the Doctor to the door, and back again.

The Doctor rose and spoke deliberately.

"Hathaway, I'm going to Washington."

"*Sir!*"

"I'm going to Washington, to-night. Whether this charge is pressed now or hereafter, it's none too soon to look after the case. I think I may be able to do something for you. Mind! I don't promise you anything. But I *may* have the power to help you, and if I can I will."

"Oh, Doctor—Doctor Peters!" the young man began—"what can I say to—"

"You can't say anything. Don't try to. All I want to hear from you is this—" he came closer, and took hold of Hathaway by both shoulders. They were nearly of a height, the young man and the older.

"I want you to promise me one thing. Never—never again to give yourself a chance to ask yourself whether you've acted like an honorable man or not."

"I promise, so help me God!" cried Paul Hathaway, with the tears in his blue eyes.

* * * * *

"Midge," said the Doctor that evening, "I'm going to Washington."

"To Washington? And when?" She looked up with a bright anticipation of pleasure in her eyes.

"To-morrow."

"Oh! I can't get ready so soon."

"There is no occasion for you to get ready, my dear. Who said anything about your going?"

"But you aren't going anywhere without me, are you?" She opened her eyes wide.

"I am, though. Yes, dear"—he put his arm about her—"It's a business trip, unfortunately. We'll make a pleasure-trip of it some day; but this time I shall have to go alone. I'm not particularly hankering after the job, anyway; but I'll have to attend to it all by myself."

"It isn't—the gun?" She spoke with a shade of incredulous apprehension.

"No, it isn't the gun. Fact is—" he frowned, and spoke hesitatingly, "it's not my own business at all. It's something I've taken in hand for young Hathaway."

"Oh, how good of you, Evert! Is it about his getting out of the navy?"

"Well—yes. It's more or less connected with that."

She laid down her book, and rose and came to him, taking his hand and patting it with a sort of admiring caress.

"And you are going to help him? You are so nice, Evert! You are always doing such things. What is it that he wants you to do?"

The Doctor frowned again, in perplexity.

"I don't think I can exactly tell you, Midge. He—he wouldn't like it. It's a matter of private business, and—and—I'm sure he wouldn't want to have me talk about it."

She moved away with a short "Oh!" and the Doctor stood in uncomfortable doubt.

"Of course, I did not mean to ask, if it is anything private," the Midge began again, after a moment. "I did not know. If he has told you not to tell me—"

"Oh, no, he didn't," the Doctor interrupted, hastily. "Nothing of the sort. He didn't say a word about you. Only—it's a private sort of thing—and I don't feel at liberty to talk about it without his permission."

He was really at a loss. He had never had a secret from the Midge, and the situation was very unpleasant to him. He wanted to give her some hint that Hathaway was in trouble; but he knew her too well to risk it. He could foresee the questions she would ask him. She would not inquire into the nature of the difficulty; but, sooner or later, she would ask if Hathaway had done anything wrong, and she would receive his answer with absolute confidence. What was he to say?

"It isn't that I don't trust you, Midge," he began, awkwardly; but she came back to him with a bright laugh, and rubbed her cheek against his shoulder, and talked to him as though he were a child.

"Oh, you dear old thing—I understand! Did you think I was angry?" She grasped the lapels of his coat, and pretended to shake him. "It is

just like you. You are the soul of honor, and you are just *conscience* all over, and I am glad of it. There!"—and she kissed him—"What do I want to know about your Mr. Paul Hathaway? Go and get your traveling-bag, and I will pack it for you. How many shirts do you want?"

The next evening Dr. Peters was in Washington. He slept that night at a hotel, and went down to breakfast the next morning at the common table, where no Midge sat opposite him, bright and fresh in flowery Watteau morning-wrapper. He did not like it at all, and in spite of his strange surroundings, through all his sense of discomfort and disturbance, he somehow felt as if it were the Midge who had gone away from him, and not he who had left the Midge behind.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL BUEL BEECHAM sat at his desk and listened rather impatiently to Dr. Peters. General Beecham was gray-bearded, with a thin, cold, rather handsome face—a New England face; the face of a man certainly self-conscious, selfish perhaps, intelligent, determined, and strong in the kind of pride that comes dangerously close to morbid vanity.

The Doctor was talking slowly but earnestly, in his low, even voice. General Beecham listened; but he played with a paper-knife, and looked out of the window, where the January breeze was whirling a thin faint fall of snow hither and thither.

"I really don't see what I have to do with this matter," he said irritably, as the Doctor paused. "I have no connection at all with the case, Mr. —Mr. Peters. You appear to think that it rests with me to determine what shall be done. You are in error. And even if—even if I had the influence you suppose me to have, I should see no reason—no reason whatever—for interfering. I am sorry for your young friend, of course; but,

as far as I can judge from what you have said, he is unquestionably guilty of a grave offense against the honor of the service, and an offense that calls for exemplary punishment. I certainly should not let my private feeling of pity for the young man interfere with my obvious duty as a public officer. And I may say, Mr.—Mr.—excuse me—Mr. Peters, that if you knew to whom you were speaking, you would hardly proffer such a request." He had worked himself up into something like indignation—a sublimated testiness, as though he felt that he ought to feel offended.

"I rather think I know you, General Beecham," said Dr. Peters, in the same quiet, slow way.

General Beecham's lower jaw suddenly set itself against the upper with a peculiar and significant firmness.

"I don't understand you, sir."

The Doctor was unmoved.

"Seems to me I've met you before, General. I was in the soldiering way once myself, and you were a colonel then. Met you only once; but I think you'll remember it if I recall the circumstances to you. You inquired my name then, and, if my memory is correct, I didn't give it to you. But I guess you remember me, all the same. You had your quarters at old Mammy Chapin's then, back of Vicksburg, and the time

I met you was the time I took a young man to you who had made a bad slip, and who was sorry for it afterwards."

"Yes," said General Beecham: "I think I know you now."

He spoke almost mechanically. His face had suddenly grown stern and troubled. He sat perfectly still, holding the paper-knife balanced in his hand, his eyes still staring out of the window, where the snow-powder whirled in the wind. The Doctor followed his gaze with a glance as absent and absorbed. He did not see the snow or the January sky. His memory was full of a day of summer heat, of dust-laden air, trembling under an intolerable glare of blue sky.

Captain Evert Peters, U. S. A., had been riding up the road that ran over the hills near the river, stretched across the broad depression that lay between them and the rise of ground far to the west, and disappeared on the hazy horizon.

He had been over a year at the front; but he had no stomach for the ride along that road. There had been some sharp fighting down below, near the old Waters place; the federal attack had been repulsed three or four hours before, and ever since daybreak the wounded had been coming in, some in ambulances, some in ox-carts. The heavy vehicles labored along in a low-hanging cloud of dust. Captain Peters, riding leisurely back toward his quarters, got sick of passing the

long train with its endless succession of suffering faces. They were silent, the most of the wounded, but they were hot and thirsty and worn out with pain and fatigue; and sometimes they groaned or swore or asked vainly for the water that was not at hand. Just as he turned from the road to follow a bridle-path that led across the fields, a team of oxen lumbered by, drawing a heavy wagon. In the bottom lay three men, one with a blanket over his legs. A negro drove, sitting sidewise on the high seat, his legs swinging over the front wheels. He was whistling with amiable cheerfulness; but he stopped his music to answer a low moan from the man with the blanket over his legs.

"D'r ain't none, honey," he said, soothingly: "I done tol' you a piece back dah wa'n't none. I'm dreffle dry myse'f, honey—fo' Gawd I wisht I had some water myse'f—I do, shuah." His tone had an exaggerated earnestness, as if he were sympathizing with a child, and he spoke of his own need of water as a consoling consideration.

Captain Peters shook his canteen—it was empty. With a sigh for the cruelty of it all—he had got beyond the first case-hardened period of soldierly indifference—he jerked his horse's head to one side and left the road behind him.

"Seems as though they ought to have *water*, anyway," he said to himself.

The bridle-path ran through a piece of woods,

and Captain Peters took off his cap as he entered the quiet shade. His eye rested gratefully on the cool spaces among the trees. He felt for a moment a sense of relaxation; of being out of the ugly business; a more than physical relief. It was only for a moment, however; the sight of a man and a horse ahead of him brought him up with tense muscles and alert nerves.

The man stood by the horse, tightening the saddle-girth. He was hardly a man, the captain saw, at a second glance. He was tall and well built; but he could not well have been sixteen years old. His clothes were ragged and worn, and much too small for him. The stained, patched shirt of blue flannel was too tight at the collar to button around his neck, and the short sleeves showed half of his white forearm. The clothes and the man did not belong together. The man gave the lie to his garments.

Captain Peters had a good minute in which to make these observations. His horse had stepped softly on the grass, and the boy did not look up until he had finished his work at the girth. Then he turned on the Captain a handsome, thin-featured young face, that went from a ghastly white to a furious red. The Captain knew the face. He had seen it two days before, at the railroad station.

"That's Beecham's boy," some one had said. "He's come down to serve on the general's staff,

with his father. Beecham took him out of school to bring him here."

"Looks too pretty for practical use," some one else had commented.

"Young man," said Captain Peters, gravely, "what are you doing here?"

The boy began to pull at the girth again, his face away from the speaker.

"I don't know what business that is of yours, sir," he replied with tremulous insolence.

"*I* do," said the Captain: "clk!"

He gave a click with his tongue, at which his horse raised his head. The boy started, and, looking up, followed with his eyes the line in which the young officer's outstretched forefinger pointed. There was a small morocco traveling satchel lying on the ground at the feet of Beecham's boy.

"Pick that up," said Captain Peters, calmly: "lead that horse of yours—that girth 'll do as it is—and come along with me."

"And suppose I won't?" asked the boy, his blood once more in his cheeks.

"I'll shoot you, my son," said the Captain.

Young Beecham looked at him, and breathed hard and fast for a few irresolute moments.

"What right have you—?" he began.

"It's no use talking, my boy," the Captain interrupted, with grim good nature; "*Anybody* has got the right. Does your father know what you're doing?"

The question, suddenly and vigorously put, was too much for the boy. He threw up his hands in a wild way, and his voice was broken with half-hysterical sobs, as he cried out:

"No! I don't care! no, he doesn't. Yes, I'm running away. That's it. You may call me a coward or anything else you want to. I don't care—I don't care, I say! I can't stand it. It makes me sick. I didn't know what it was—I thought I wanted to come here—but I didn't know what it was. I'm not afraid of being killed—if any one says so, he's a liar. I'd rather die than see it all. Oh, it's awful—awful!" He pressed his palms to his eyes, his fingers clutching his head. "I've been up since five o'clock, watching them come in," he went on; "and it almost drove me crazy. For God's sake, take me anywhere—anywhere where I won't see them. I don't care what you do with me—send me to prison—only let me get away from this terrible place."

The Captain's voice gave no hint of either sympathy or disdain, as he said:

"Get on that horse, young man, and come along with me."

The boy obeyed, silently. He hung his head. His eyes were wet with the ready tears of youth. They rode on together through the woods, hearing no sound save the breaking of dry twigs under their horses' hoofs, and the rustle and

whirr of an occasional frightened bird, flying away at their approach.

Finally the Captain spoke.

"Who gave you those clothes?"

"These clothes?" the boy repeated, anxiously.

"Your father's servant, wasn't it?—the nigger."

Young Beecham lifted his head.

"I shan't tell you," he said. "You have no right to ask me that."

"Just so," the Captain assented; "that's a fact. I haven't."

They passed out of the woods in silence, and struck the road. They were not pushing their horses; but the pace at which they traveled brought them up with the rear of the ambulance train in a few minutes. The last wagon was the one which Captain Peters had noticed when he left the road. Something had caused it to drop behind the others. As they came alongside it, the Captain remembered the wounded man who had asked for water.

"Is there anything in your canteen?" he demanded, turning to the boy, who was staring at the wagon load with a sickened fascination.

Beecham took the tin flask from his pocket. "There's water in it," he said.

Captain Peters rode up and hailed the negro driver, who was whistling still, but somewhat less cheerily, as though the burden and heat of the day were beginning to wear on him, too. He

stopped his team, and the Captain thrust the flask over the side of the wagon. Two of the occupants were sitting propped up against the back of the seat. One was wounded in the shoulder, and the other was badly cut about the head, which was swathed in rough bandages. Both of them drank, acknowledging the attention with eager grunts. The negro looked on with mutely yearning eyes. When the second man handed the canteen back it was empty. The Captain glanced at the third man, the one who had lain with a blanket over his legs. The blanket covered his whole body now, and his upturned face.

The man with the wounded shoulder saw Captain Peters's glance, and spoke.

"*He* don't want no water no more."

The other sufferer lifted his head, swaddled in dirty white, directed a wink of sinister humor at the Captain, and said to his comrade:

"How do you know he don't, Pete?"

The Captain looked at young Beecham. He was shaking with an aguish tremor. They hurried on, riding down the long line; and until they had taken the cross-road that led to Colonel Beecham's quarters, the boy kept his head averted, looking off the road to the bare and dusty fields.

When they came in sight of the little hill on which the old Waters house stood, Beecham

grew pale and made a motion to check his horse. He saw the Captain looking at him, and he pressed on. But his boy's face expressed an emotion of mortal anguish. He was suffering as only young things can suffer.

There was a little clump of bushes and low trees near the gate of the place. When they reached it, Peters spoke, as quietly as ever.

"Stay here till I come back. You hear me?"

The boy nodded, with an effort. Captain Peters rode up to the house, and in five minutes he had said what he had to say to Colonel Beecham, and the two men were walking down to the spot where the boy stood, motionless as death, with his tortured white face turned expectantly toward them.

* * * * *

General Beecham was more than twenty years older, his black beard had gone gray, a score years of ambition and successful struggle had hardened his handsome features; but the face that stared in blank misery out of the window of the office in Washington was the same face that when Peters had last seen it had reflected the shame and agony of that younger face that to-day was but a memory.

General Beecham's eyes did not leave the window as he spoke to the Doctor, in a harsh, constrained voice, picking his words with evident distaste for speaking at all.

"At the time I met you, Captain Peters—pardon me—you are Captain Peters still?"

"Plain 'mister,' now," said the Doctor.

"Captain Peters," the General resumed, with a slight inclination of his head, and a quietly dignified insistence in his tone: "I told you, at that time, that you had put me under the greatest obligation of my life. It has been the only obligation of my life. I have never—"

"Excuse me!" broke in the Doctor; and at his tone General Beecham started and wheeled round in his chair, his eyes opening wider as they rested on the speaker. "*I* told you at that time, General Beecham, that you were under no obligation whatever to me. What I did, I did not do to oblige you, or to oblige any one; but because I felt that the boy had a *right* to be judged mercifully."

There was nearly a minute of silence between the two men. Then General Beecham got up and went to the window and drummed on the pane.

"Do you know—about my boy—afterwards?" he asked, slowly.

"In Virginia?"

"Yes. He led his company, you know, when McIlvaine was shot?"

"I heard about it," said the Doctor.

General Beecham came back from the window.

"I have a letter here," he began, with an

anxious eagerness in his manner, "which Crawford—Colonel John Crawford—you know him? —wrote me at the time. I'd like you to see it."

His fingers were shaky as he took out his wallet and drew from it a discolored paper, folded and cracked at the folds. He spread it out carefully, almost tenderly, before he gave it to the Doctor. Then he smiled in a wan way. "I've often wanted to meet you, Captain," he went on: "to show it to you. He was only seventeen then. He would have been thirty-nine this January, if—"

The Doctor pretended to read the paper on his lap; but he had no heart to try to make sense of it. He only remembered afterward that old-fashioned Colonel Crawford wrote: "An act of such exceptional Gallantry, performed by one so Young, merits the highest commendation from his Superior Officer."

General Beecham was again drumming on the window-pane.

"I thank you, Captain Peters," he said, somewhat awkwardly, "for pointing out to me that it was my duty to look at this matter in a rather more Christian light—to—to make allowances. I suppose we all—we all need these reminders from time to time. This has been painful to me, of course; but I am glad to have had the opportunity of letting you know how Buel—how my boy retrieved his—" he paused—"his error."

"I knew it before," said the Doctor, rising; "or I should not have spoken."

General Beecham dropped into his seat, and stroked his gray beard with a thin, nervous hand.

"Of course, of course, you understand, Captain Peters—after what you have said, I shall certainly look into this matter, and I shall see what can be done for your young friend. Your opinion of the case must naturally go a long way with me. And you must pardon me if—if I did not take this view of it, at first. The clemency of the department has been so outrageously abused —are you staying in Washington for any length of time?"

"I leave to-night," the Doctor told him.

"I should have liked to—to show you something—well, never mind."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE weary trip from Baltimore to New York came hard on the Doctor. A sense of depression for which he could not account weighed on him with a discomfort that was almost physical. He had succeeded in his mission; yet he felt down-cast and troubled. He tried to reason it out with himself, but he could not. Perhaps, he thought, it was the stirring up of old memories that had made him feel old himself. Perhaps it was merely the natural effect of a first absence from home and from the dear child whose presence made all that he meant when he said to himself, "home."

"It's my stomach," he concluded, as he got out of a University Place car at Houston Street. "I'll go to Pigault's and get a nip of brandy to settle those sawdust sandwiches at Wilmington. I shall frighten the Midge if I go home like this."

Pigault's had changed within the past year or so. It was no longer a *brasserie*—it was rather an American bar-room. The little crowd that had formerly come, night after night, to drink

mild potations of beer and play long games of dominos, had somehow melted away. The Doctor had been the first to depart; then M. Marié had gone up town, to teach in a fashionable school (and ultimately to run away with a German brewer's daughter, and to be forgiven and made a slave of authority among the slaves in the brewery counting-room); Mr. Martin was dead, and little Potain was in the lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island, all day long reading a newspaper aloud to an imaginary wife. And, for one reason or another, they had all deserted the place. The "young fellows" of the quarter had it pretty well to themselves now. There was a pool-table in the rear of the room. Mme. Pigault sat no more behind the desk. A barkeeper with a black moustache and a white apron mixed drinks with agility and despatch, shoved his compositions to one set of customers with his left hand, and grasped a fresh bottle in his right as he hailed the next lot with "Well, gents, what'll it be?"

Half way down the counter swung a screen, shutting off the further half from the sight of people at the door. There was a general deterioration, moral and material, about the place; but this was its last and worst sign.

The Doctor, who had all his life drank what he had a right to drink in the face of all the world, carefully placed himself between the screen and the door, and asked for a "pony" of brandy. As

the barkeeper poured it out, he heard a familiar voice at the other side of the screen. Bending forward enough to glance down the bar, he saw Piero and young Goubaud, the puffy-faced, weak, absinthe-drinking son of the house of Goubaud.

The place had indeed run down. The Doctor was no aristocrat, neither had the line of caste been sharply drawn in the old brasserie, as he remembered it; but such a couple as this would never have been allowed to hang over the bar in the days when Mme. Pigault's comely presence graced the other side of that piece of furniture. Goubaud's voice was husky, and Piero was talking so loud and laughing so much, that the Doctor felt sure that the man of maritime ways was taking a sailor's privilege.

At the moment, he was urgently asserting that some one was a good man.

"Oh, yes," he said, "he is a good man. I know 'im—ten—fifteen—twenty yeah. He good man—fairs' rate boss vair' damn good man."

Young Goubaud had his doubts about this, and expressed them with thick earnestness, reiterating after the fashion of a man who exploits an old grievance.

"I do' know," he grumbled, "I do' know 'bout zat. I tell you, seh, I do' know 'bout zat. Ouat fo' he ouant take money out my pipple's pocket fo'? I tell you, M'sieu' Piero, I tell you, seh, he don't had no right fo' to take zat ge'l away f'om

w'eh she ouas sen' to bo'd. I tell you, M'sieu' Piero, zat ouas not ho-no-*ra*-ble—no. My poo' fazzer, zat take ze money out f'om his pocket, same you put yo' hand in an' take it out."

"Ouell," said Piero, consolingly, "zat all a-ight now—he don' kip her no mo', I guess. Zat young fel', he take her away prit' soon, I guess. She laike young man betteh as ol' man."

"Zat se'v him raight, M'sieu Piero," said young Goubaud, with Rhadamanthine severity: I tell you, M'sieu Piero, I tell *you*—"

Piero laughed loudly, the humor of the situation growing on him.

"I guess he don' kip her fo' himse'f no more —young fel' get her—ol' man ain't got no show." And he laughed still more noisily.

The Doctor, facing the screen, half raised his clenched fists. Then a look of disgust came over his face; the steely fire went out of his eyes, and he turned away, and walked out of the place utterly sick at heart.

The barkeeper looked at the untouched glass and the quarter of a dollar lying beside it. He poured the brandy back into the bottle. "Old gent seems to be pretty well rattled," he said to himself. Then he put the quarter in the till, took out ten cents in change, and carefully put the ten cents under the cheese-safe at the end of the bar, where there were various other coins already deposited.

* * * * *

The Doctor could hardly bear to go on his way and meet the Midge, yet he did, and so controlled himself that she saw only his obvious fatigue and exhaustion. She made him go through the motions of eating a bit of supper, and gave him a glass of the hottest hot punch that affection and boiling water could produce, and then sent him to bed. She had asked him nothing about the business on which he had gone—not even whether he had been successful or no. She had only expressed her delight at having him back, treating him royally to her rare kisses, and rallying him brightly on his desertion of her. And he had taken her caresses and had returned them, with a sense of absolute shame, with a feeling of guilt, as though he were receiving something under false pretenses.

When he got into his own room—he did not go to bed—he tried to think it all over. It was shocking—it was shameful—but he had to admit that it was something that he should have foreseen. It was a vile thing that there should be people to talk and think as those two louts in the bar-room had talked and thought. But then he had always known what the world was. Was any one to blame—except himself—because he had found out what he ought to have expected, if he had used his brains? He had been watching the Midge, furtively, in the half hour during which she had let him sit up and be nursed and

petted. But he had had no need to make the inspection. From the moment that he had heard Piero's speech the Midge had ceased to be the Midge to him—she had become a woman. He marveled how it was that he had looked at her before and had made no more of her sex than if she had been his sister, or a piece of furniture. He could never think of her in that way again. She was a woman. She was not only a woman, but a pretty woman. And more than that, she was a charming and fascinating woman, radiant with that mysterious power which is given to some women irrespective of beauty or cleverness—the power of making men admire and love and worship and long for them.

He had seen it all before, of course, but he had not been conscious that he saw. Now he saw, indeed. He had looked at her a thousand times with fond affection, as she moved about the rooms, busying herself with little duties, singing softly to herself, fetching and carrying this or that for his comfort and convenience. But she had been, in a way, a part of him, a part of his life. He had had no consciousness of her as a distinct being—as one of the women who make up the other half of our world. Now, all of a sudden, he could look at her from a distance, and take note and cognizance of her as though she were a stranger. Now, for the first time, it meant something to him that she was graceful as

she moved, as she lifted her head, as she turned her delicate white wrists; that her face was full of quick changing expressions; that her voice had tones like music, mysteriously expressive, provoking, alluring; that she could, when she pleased, turn to him and make manifest in her whole bearing a thought of love or tenderness that was in itself a caress. He did not formulate this in clean-cut thought; but as an emotion it was forcibly present and real to him. And in all the whirl of puzzled feeling and thinking in which he found himself, one idea came over and over again to him, and he drove it angrily away, and tried to put it aside, and was ashamed that it should come back to him—over and over again.

* * * * *

The next day he went to see Paul Hathaway. Mr. Hathaway was living in a certain caravansary in Clinton Place, that did not call itself a lodging house, but that had "furnished rooms to let." It had been a grand old house in its time. The mahogany folding-doors were there still, though they never rolled back in their grooves, opening the great archway between the two parlors; for an actress had the back parlor, and a chiropodist was in front. A great many people knew that old house who would not care to boast of their acquaintance with it. Many lively and rather disreputable young Bohemians, and many dull and respectable dry-goods clerks have occu-

pied those dingy rooms. The men who gave that word "Bohemian" its meaning to New Yorkers, men who live now only as traditions; men who have reformed themselves into Philistine solidity, men who have made themselves great and honored in literature; men who are still staking body and soul against drink and poverty and general degradation—scores of such men have taken their turn in that queer lodging-house, and have gone on their hurried way through youth.

Many a bright boy has clattered over the marble pavement of that great hall-way, swung himself up the mighty spiral staircase, bolted into his little room on the third or fourth floor, and found the letter there from the great magazine, respectfully declining his poem. Then he has cursed the magazine for a ring-ridden humbug, run by a clique of selfish old-fashioned harpies of literature, in league with that hypocritical dunderhead, the complimentary, polite, regretful, manuscript-returning editor. And he has dashed off, of a Saturday night, maybe, to forget it and seek a happier world in the wretched holes so near at hand, with vile drink and with viler company. And on the morrow he has wakened to find in a headache and an empty purse the result of all such experiments in consolation, and he has sent off a letter to—well, the likeliest man he knew, asking for a dollar or two,

for God's sake: and if the dollar or two came, he has bought brandy and soda, and has sat him down to write a poem on his headache, which he has sent to the magazine he cursed the night before, and to which he has sworn a hundred times never to apply again, and from which he surely gets back that liberal-spirited lay. And if the dollar or two did not come, why, he lay in bed, and listened to the church-bells, and crawled out when the freshness of the day was gone, to wait, breakfastless, for dinner-time.

What becomes of such boys? One whom I knew, lodging in that very house, is now a "prominent" leather-dealer in the swamp. He would draw his check for a thousand dollars if I would let him destroy that scrap-book of his poems now in my possession. Another is the distinguished and successful *littérateur*—there is a point where a successful writer ceases to be a literary man and clearly becomes a *littérateur*—who is now in Europe, purchasing choice olive-wood for his library shelves. A third is in a little cemetery near Schenectady, where the Seneca grass fills the wind with its old-time scent, all summer long.

The Doctor climbed the long dark sweep of three stairs, and entered Hathaway's tiny room, where the yellow walls were covered with water-color sketches. There were other sketches tied up in a bundle, and the open trunk was evi-

dently in process of packing. The Doctor saw it and smiled. He had been a boy, and had discounted Fate, in his time.

Hathaway looked haggard and tired; but his eyes were brighter, for the Doctor had sent him a cheery note from Washington, and his sky had begun to clear already. Still, he was very humble and gentle, and his humility and submission seemed strangely out of keeping with his bright, aggressive youth.

He gave the Doctor his one chair, and sat on the bed, which was not yet made up, while he listened to the report. He thanked his friend gratefully and simply; but his cheerfulness did not come back to him. He went over his story again, and the Doctor learned of a number of palliative facts which the boy had been too proud to adduce in his own defense while his fate was in the balance.

When it was done, the Doctor sat looking at the young man, as he lay half-stretched-out on the tumbled bed. Neither spoke for a while, and then Hathaway said, staring hard at the small pillow, out of which he was trying to pluck a feather:

"I suppose, after this, sir, that you'll object —that is, that you won't want—that you had rather I wouldn't see Miss Lois—Miss Talbot."

The Doctor rose, thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, and stood looking down at his boots.

"No," he said, after a while, drawing in his breath through his closed lips, and speaking thoughtfully: "no, my boy, I had rather you *would* see her. That is, if it's going to prevent you from seeing—the kind of thing you *have* seen."

"You're too—too devilish good to me, Dr. Peters," cried the boy.

"Nonsense," said the Doctor, absent-mindedly. He was thinking how the Midge and he between them could be of help to young Hathaway.

"Do you, don't you think—perhaps I ought—" the young man began, stammering. The Doctor smiled.

"I think not, Hathaway," he said: "there's no reason why she should ever know anything about it. It's closed and done with now, and you know more than you did, and we might as well drop the subject. Besides"—his face grew grave—"women can not be made to look at these things as men do. You don't want to think of it." He grew graver still as he considered the possibility. He knew the Midge's code of honor—his own, passed through the close small filter of a woman's ignorant purity. He shook his head and put the question aside. "Come around to-morrow evening," he said: "I shall probably have heard from Washington by that time."

When Hathaway came around that next evening, the Doctor had heard from Washington. General Beecham wrote that Mr. Hathaway

would be permitted to resign, without further investigation into the charges already preferred, and that Señor Garcia had been informed that if he was wise he would refrain from pressing his demands, and would thus avoid certain inquiries which our representatives would otherwise be instructed to make into his financial transactions with certain gentlemen in the naval service of the United States.

The letter enclosed to Captain Peters an item from a newspaper of 1864, giving an account of the erection of a tablet in the college chapel at Williamstown, to the memory of Lieutenant Buel Beecham, the gallant young soldier, who fell in the Battle of the Wilderness—a tribute from his affectionate class-mates.

* * * * *

As he was on his way home from Clinton Place, the Doctor met Father Dubé, slowly pacing down past the dreary gray front of the University building, which looked, that dull winter day, more than ever like some huge pasteboard toy.

The two men greeted each other warmly, for they had not met often of late.

"I have not seen you in an age," said the Father, pressing Doctor Peters's hand. "Give me news of yourself, and of the little one. She is not married yet, eh?"

"No," replied the Doctor, uneasily; "I can't find any man good enough for her."

"No," assented Father Dubé; "I know but one, and he is—too modest."

His eyes made his meaning clear. The Doctor flushed hotly. Dubé laid a large hand on his shoulder.

"Why should I not say it," he remonstrated, kindly. "I am sure it would be for the best, for both of you. It is only we priests who ought not to marry. For you others, it is a duty."

"You oughtn't to talk in that way to a man of my age, Dubé," said the Doctor. He was awkward and uncomfortable, and conscious of himself.

"Of your age? What is your age? You are forty—forty-five?"

"Forty-six."

"Bah! what is that? You are young—you are strong; you lead a good life—you are young. I am sixty-four. It is not so terrible to be sixty-four. Why should you not marry? Why not? Will some stranger—the first boy you meet—will he be so kind to her as you? Ah, well, I have said enough. You will not come to me when you marry. But I will bless you all the same. Good-bye, my friend."

The Doctor walked rapidly across the Park. He felt like a boy, like a fool, but his heart was beating fast, and he was saying to himself, while his cheeks burnt:

"Why not?—why not?"

CHAPTER XV.

WHY not? He had refused to entertain the thought; he had turned it away from him and bade it begone. But it had been brought back to him, and now that he was forced to let it in, and to look it in the face, what was there about it that should make him refuse it hospitality? It was not a mean or unworthy thought —it seemed, indeed, when once he looked at it face to face, simple, natural and beautiful. After all, wherein was it strange? When a man and a woman loved each other, they married. And did not he love this woman, and did not she love him? Only—was it with the same love?

Ah, he was gone. From the moment that he asked himself that question, and that the answering doubt came with its sudden chill to his heart, the Doctor had slipped from the safe ground of pure reason, and was groping about in that dim wild dreamland of uncertainty in which, since time began, every lover has walked his appointed time; in which every lover shall walk until time shall end. There are no exemptions or exceptions, there are no classes or conditions for those who

enter that strange limbo. Great or small, wise or foolish, they wander hither and thither in the mist, led by flickering lights and great revealing flashes, cast down in deathly darkness, and wakened again by a warm glow on the far horizon. And so they must wander, until they go out of the place by one of two gates. And for those that go out by the one gate, the light of the morning is on their faces; and for those that go out by the other gate, may God have pity on them!

He was no better off now, for all his years and his brains and his doctoring and his soldiering, than the veriest boy that ever tied his heart to a ribbon or went at night to look at a common brick-and-mortar house because of a woman sleeping somewhere in it.

He had to ask the same question of Fate, and to ask it with the same knowledge that the answer could not be affected by any will or wish of his of the woman he loved. It was to be, or it was not to be, and he, and she, perhaps, must wait for the revelation.

He was at his own door before he knew it, and he found himself wondering how he should meet the Midge. Two minutes later, he found himself meeting her and talking with her calmly and quietly, without embarrassment, without confusion, with no sense of awkwardness whatever.

For the first time he looked at this comrade

of years, at this child grown a woman under his care; and knew that he wanted her for his wife. As far as he could make out, he ought to have been nervous and constrained. Perhaps he ought to have been ashamed of himself. But, as a matter of fact, he was not nervous, or constrained, or ashamed. He did not understand the change in his own attitude; but he was conscious of it. An hour before, he had blushed at the mere idea. Now he was as shameless about it as if he had been King Cophetua and she a beggar-maid with no choice in the matter.

In truth, as he looked at her and listened to her, he was aware within himself of a certain feeling of triumphant superiority. It was for him to take this dear and lovely creature by the hand and to say to her: "You thought that this was all—this sweet companionship and tender affection. But there is more—infinitely more and infinitely better, and I will lead you to it."

The Midge went to bed early that evening, as though in obedience to some unspoken wish of his. He wanted to be alone; to "have a think," and he had it, by the fire, far into the night. He had looked forward to this hour of self-counsel, but when it came, it was not what he had expected it would be. He had thought that he would reason out with himself the question of his right to love the Midge. He found that he regarded that question as settled; that he looked

upon it as an accepted premise, upon which he could base—upon which he was basing his calculations for the future. He was surprised at this; he had not yet realized that when a man is in love, his intellectual faculties are handed over to the control of the mysterious power within him which takes him in charge and makes an inspired fool of him; and that he himself does not know how he will argue out the simplest problem in the privacy of his own mind. But it seemed to him that, in some mysterious way, he had quite settled this one thing. Indeed, if he thought at all of the past, it was only to try to trace this new love back over the lines of the old; to identify the two, and to prove to himself that they had always been the same; that from the first he had loved her with this very love, that had only been disguised as something like parental affection until the time came for its disclosure as a greater and higher thing.

But most of his thoughts—which were not thoughts, he found; rather imaginings—dealt with the present and the future.

One idea came to him, at first with a chill, then with a sudden glow of pleased and suggestive anticipation—that *she* did not know all this: that *she* must be taught to love—must be wooed. He must begin a courtship. Indeed, he felt as though he had yet to be introduced to the woman he had to court.

Just here, the Doctor's memory took an odd backward twist. He remembered certain boyish thoughts of a certain Alida Jansen, and he understood now why he had been glad when he woke up in his little attic bed-room, and thought that singing-school was to be held that night.

The courtship began the next day, but not quite in the way the Doctor had planned. He was much surprised to find that his manner toward the Midge had already changed, unconsciously and involuntarily. It distinctly asserted a masterful superiority.

Beyond this, he did not make any active move. And for the next few days, in fact, for the next few weeks, he had business other than his own to attend to—and it was his custom to attend to other people's business before his own. Mr. Paul Hathaway, now out of the navy, had to be established in life as a self-supporting citizen. This was done, after a little while, more successfully than the Doctor could have hoped. The sympathies of Parker Prout and Jack Wilder being enlisted, Hathaway sold some sketches in Nassau Street, and got some odd jobs on the *Morning Record*, which was now "illustrated," with outline cuts, conceived in the utmost simplicity of art.

But all this involved a great deal of consultation and discussion and speculation among the three of them—for the Midge was at once called

into their councils. Hathaway called almost every day, and they held long debates over the smallest move he took. The Midge was a modest authority in matters of art, and the Doctor was general business-adviser. The Doctor felt a particular pride in acquitting himself well of his duties. It seemed to him that he was doing himself credit in the eyes of the Midge, and he was proud and pleased when he conducted Mr. Hathaway's affairs to a fortunate issue.

And Hathaway's affairs certainly flourished. Everybody pronounced his sketches clever, and his draughtsmanship worthy of an older hand. Parker Prout said he was going to be a great artist, and there was no doubt whatever that he was facile, adaptive and intelligent. Before the spring was far advanced, he was earning a modest living for himself, and had repaid a small loan from the Doctor.

So encouraging were Mr. Hathaway's prospects that in March he engaged in a grand competition. The *New York Monthly* proposed to send a ship around the world; and a famous writer was to recount the history of the voyage. The illustrations were to be made by a famous artist, assisted by a novice in art. All novices in art were invited to compete for the honor, by sending sketches to a chosen committee of artists. The only conditions were that they should be

native born and under thirty years of age. With both of these conditions Mr. Hathaway could comply. He sent in his sketches, and in due time was notified that he was one of five most promising contestants, and that the prize would be awarded to the one of these best qualified, by nature and training, for the work. Mr. Hathaway presented himself before the committee with a fluttering but confident heart.

This came about toward the end of the month, and the breath of April was in the air when, one warm evening, the Doctor and the Midge sat before the ghost of a fire. He felt honestly and innocently proud of having been able to help Hathaway, and he could hold it in no longer.

"I think our young friend is pretty fairly launched—Hathaway, I mean," he said.

The Midge was sewing, bending low over her work, so that the gaslight fell on her dark hair. She paused to give a woman's speculative, observant look at the stuff in her lap before she responded.

"You think it is all right for him—for the future?" she said.

"I think it's a sure thing for him—he's almost certain to get it."

"Then he will go away?"

"Why yes. But it's only for a year or so. He'll enjoy the voyage."

The Midge said nothing.

"It's a grand opportunity for any young man," he went on, meditatively; "it will be the making of him in his—his business."

"Is it not dangerous?" hazarded the young woman.

The Doctor fairly laughed.

"My dear child!" he remonstrated, "after a man has been knocking about for years in one of those old tubs that we call men-of-war! Why he'll think he's safer than he's ever been before in his life.

Dr. Peters filled and lit his pipe before the Midge spoke again.

"Evert," she said, "I do not wish to ask too much, or what I should not. But there was some trouble that he was in—Mr. Hathaway—when you went to Washington. It was trouble, was it not?"

"Why, yes," he answered, doubtfully.

"I do not want to know," she hurried on, "what it was—I do not ask that. But was it—was it something—it was nothing against him?—nothing *wrong*.

The Doctor had been prepared for this, in some sort, from the first; but it cost him a quick mental wrench to get his conscience and his logic in accord as he replied, with great firmness and decision:

"No, my dear."

He held himself justified in saying this. What-

ever wrong had been done, it was repented of, atoned for, and would never be repeated. To the Doctor it was as though it had not been. What right had he even to speak of a cancelled sin as a present fact?

"No," he said once more: "if there had been anything of that kind, my dear—anything to make us alter our relations toward the lad, I should have told you. But there was not. He was indiscreet, I suppose; but—well, we're all more or less fools, all the humans made on any pattern known up to date; and he isn't any such startling variety of fool that we need to be too particular with him. No, no, he's a good boy, my dear."

"I am glad," she said softly, resting her chin on her hand as she looked into the fire. "That there was nothing *bad*—that is well. I could not *bear* it."

She spoke with emphasis. The Doctor, still smoking meditatively, nodded approvingly.

"I know how you feel about those things, my love," he said.

She began again, a little nervously.

"Evert, it—it—you do not think it strange that I ask such a question about his private affairs? He would not think it was something I had no right to ask about?"

"I should think he'd feel very much flattered at the interest you take in him," the Doctor re-

plied, reassuringly. "Indeed, I think you have been particularly friendly and kind to him, Midge. He ought to be grateful to you."

She rose quickly, and came and seated herself on the arm of his chair.

"No, it is you who have been good to him—you need not tell me—I know it. You are good to everybody, Evert." She bent over and kissed him. He smiled with a deep gratification. It was this praise that he had wanted beyond any other reward for well-doing. "You have done *everything* for him, Evert."

"No, my dear," he corrected her, with a pleased generosity, "he's done pretty well everything for himself. You can't do much for a man. *He's* got to do the doing, in the end. Hathaway's a fine fellow. I hope he'll come back from this trip and settle down and make a position for himself, right here where we can see him. And we shan't be sorry that we gave him a lift when he first needed it, shall we, little one?" He took her disengaged hand in his. The other fluttered to and fro a dangling trail of fancy-work. The Doctor glanced at the flimsy stuff with careless interest, and smiled. He thought how happy he could be, in all the years to come, sitting thus by the fire and seeing her work inexplicable things in soft materials of which he did not even know the names.

She did not answer his question directly; but

rose, freeing herself with a motion that was almost a caress, and returned to her seat.

"You are too good to everybody, Evert," she said, giving her head a sad little shake: "you do not know it; but you are too good. Sometimes you make me wish you were not so good."

The Doctor smiled. "I'm not so good, Midge," he said. "You may find me considerable of a bother yet. But I'm glad I've been able to be of some use to that boy Hathaway. And I rather think his future's settled—that is, in a business way. I'd like to see him safely married, though. He needs it."

"Why do you think he needs it?" asked the Midge, quietly.

The heap of glowing coals in the grate fell with a little crash into a flickering crater. The Doctor stopped to pile up the fire before he replied.

"Everybody needs it, my dear. When it's a good thing at all, it's the best thing in the world. I should like to have that boy have a fireside—" he bent over and poked vigorously at the half-kindled cannel—"a fireside, a fireside—that's the thing. I don't mean only a grate, and coal and stuff—there's a woman goes with every real, genuine fireside. That's what he wants—that's what—'most everybody else wants—a woman. A woman, Midge. A man's only half a man if

one half of him ain't a woman. That's one of the truths a man's got to learn; and I've noticed" —he smiled at the fire—"that Providence generally provides him with a teacher."

He sat, bending forward, playing with the poker, patting the lumps of cannel till they gently cracked into clean fissures that coaxed the wandering flames. He was talking as though he were talking to himself. The Midge rose abruptly, gathering up her work, and moved toward the door of her room.

"I'm tired, Evert," she said, in the hushed undertone that women use when their thoughts are apart from their speech. "I think I'll go to bed."

For a moment he made no effort to detain her; then he stretched out his hand and said:

"Aren't you going to bid me good-night?"

She turned back quickly—her hand was on the handle of the door—and kissed him on the forehead. Then she withdrew, with a pleasant rustling of garments. He sat still, smiling at the fire, until the sudden sharp ring of the door-bell below fell on his ear. He heard it sleepily, sitting back and listening with a pleased, absent-minded smile—pleased at his own thoughts. Vaguely he heard some one stumble up the stairs; then there was a knock at the door, and he rose to take a crumpled note from a sleepy messenger-boy.

The note was this:

"March 31st.

"My dear Doctor:—

"I have got the appointment. The committee accepted me without discussion. And now I have something to say to you that will give you pain; but I cannot help it. I do not feel that I have the right to speak to her without your permission; but I want to come to-morrow, early, to ask Lois to be my wife. I know what this must be to you—but will you forgive me if I take her from you? I know that you look upon her as a daughter. I know how selfish I must seem, and, believe me, I know what I owe to you. I feel sure that she will say Yes—and if I could feel as sure that you would give us both your blessing, I should be happy.

"Gratefully and truly yours,

"PAUL HATHAWAY."

CHAPTER XVI.

HE heard the sleepy messenger-boy thump his doubtful way down the stairs, as he read the last lines of the note.

Of course. Why had he not known it before—why had he not seen it before? He felt as if he had been asleep a long time, getting a respite from the burden of some awful truth, and had suddenly awakened to a chill dawning of inevitable consciousness.

He thought of it with a horror-stricken sense of shame, as of some omitted duty. What had he done—what had he been about to do? He had meant to ask this woman to be his wife—this woman who loved another man. It came to him with a ghastly cold clearness that she would have struggled with herself, would have fought down her love for duty's sake, and would have married him, loving this other man, to be miserable all life long.

The cold draught from the still open door blew in on him. He was dimly conscious of it; but it seemed nothing to him beside the deeper chill that had penetrated to his inmost being, para-

lyzing his soul. In a blind, mechanical way he rose and moved across the room and shut the door. He thought that he staggered; but he was not sure. His consciousness of himself seemed far removed from the flesh-and-blood automaton that got up from its seat and went to shut a door and stop a draught.

He had held the letter in his hand all the time. It was in his hand when he sat down again. With an absolutely, involuntary motion, he raised it to the level of his eyes two or three times, and each time his eyes wandered away, seeing nothing save some most commonplace and meaningless bit of their surroundings—a corner of the mantelpiece, the bow of the ribbon that tied the window-curtains back, his pipe, lying on the table, half full of lifeless gray ashes.

He felt this an unpardonable weakness, and pulled himself together, with scowling brows. He read the letter half through, and then had to read it over again. He had understood the words, as each one had come under his eye; but they had been only words. They had meant nothing beyond signs and sounds. He read them now with a stern determination to drive their sense into his head.

He distinctly felt, as he began, that he was doing something hopeless, futile; a mere makeshift to fill up the time until he could command himself. But he had not read the third sentence

through before his heart sprung up in him with a wild intoxication of joy. What was it, after all? This boy wanted to marry the woman *he* himself loved. Well, what of that? Had he not been warned of it? Was it not to be expected? Did it follow that *she* loved *him?* What reason had he to suppose that any such absurd, wild thing was possible? He passed his hand over his eyes, like a man who tries to clear away a dream. He must have been mad to think of it. Faintly and feebly, he laughed aloud to himself, and sighed in weary relief. He had been nervous; that was it; he had dwelt so long and so earnestly on this one thought that he had grown morbid and excitable, and he had lost his self-control. It was an impossibility, an absurdity, and he must have been strangely weak to consider it at all.

Then he reflected that he would have to consider it, and this brought a certain cheering strength to him. To have something to reason out, something to employ his faculties, gave him a hold on himself. He got up again, and walked up and down the room, and tried to think it all over. What did he know positively? That Paul Hathaway was in love with the Midge; that Hathaway thought the Midge loved him. Did she love Hathaway? He could not believe that he could have been so blind as not to have seen it if she did. Yet, he remembered, and his heart sank, he had been so blind as not to see

that Hathaway was in love. Had he not been blind in every direction? For the idea had been suggested to him, weeks before. But then he remembered how that idea had been suggested, and how he had put it out of his mind entirely, as an unworthy thought. He had set it aside out of pure loyalty to young Hathaway. He had refused even to think that this boy, whom he had made his friend, could dream of stealing away from him the woman in whom his life was wrapped up.

And now he had it, in Hathaway's own hand, that this inconceivable thing was a positive fact. He grew hot with sudden anger. What right had this pink-and-white boy to come in with his boyish love, his boyish passion, his boyish, arrogant hope, to dare to think of taking this woman from him? And suppose—suppose she loved the boy? Well, again, what of it? Should a boy-and-girl fancy such as that weigh against a man's love—his own love, grown from the smallest beginnings, grown naturally into a great, consuming passion, something that, sooner or later, however she might mistake herself now, she must answer to?

He grew hotter and hotter as he walked up and down. Anger gave him a strange fluency of thought. He saw with vivid clearness how he had loved the child and the woman with a love that had changed not in nature, but only in

growth. He did not think of what he had done for her; but only of what he had tried to be to her—how he had studied her tastes, her capacities, her tendencies; how he had conscientiously tried to teach her the best that he knew, to make of her the best that it was in her to be.

And now this boy—this Hathaway—came in smug and smiling, and self-complacent, with his little sixpenny, sentimental fancy—this fellow who a year or two before had been swearing love and promising marriage to the common coquette of a South American naval station. Great God! but he would put an end to this profanation—he, an honest man, with but one love to his life. Whatever pain it cost her, for the moment, whatever she or any one might think of it, at least this thing should not be. He knew, to an absolute certainty, that he had only to tell her what he knew, and Paul Hathaway would go out of her life forever. He knew she would never forgive such an outrage against love and honor. He knew what she was and what he himself had taught her, and that she could never forgive as he—fool that he was—had forgiven.

He remembered what she had once said: "*Yes, I do belong to you, Evert, I will do whatever you say, now and always.*"

He strode wildly across the room to her door, meaning to throw it open—it was never locked—to go to her bedside, as he had gone many a

time before to watch over her in some childish sickness, and there to tell her the truth, and leave her to struggle with and kill whatever love she might have for this fellow. But he stopped suddenly, with his hand on the door, every muscle in him cold and quivering, and he knew that he could not go into that room. Until that moment he had not known how he loved. He had thought of his love as a simple and natural affection; the growth of years; a mere development of an earlier fatherly tenderness. He knew now that it was the love of a man who wants a woman for his wife; and he knew that never, unless this woman were his wife, could he cross the sill of her chamber, and look upon her as she lay asleep.

He turned back and went to the window, and looked out. It was faintly misty. The light of the morning sun was somewhere high in the heavens, and its dull refraction lit up all things with an even, cold light that had no life in it. He saw the great vacant Square, and the broad, red brick houses opposite. Their marble facings stared out, a dull, damp white.

If the body of your dearest friend lay in your house, there would be times when it was nothing but a corpse to you—something lifeless and not human, that claims a mocking identity with the man you loved; that is he, and is not he. You want to get it away, out of sight, this cold gray

thing, that must always come between you and your remembrance of him you knew when he lived and breathed and moved, and had color in his cheeks and light in his eyes. A feeling akin to this took hold on the Doctor as he looked out of the window into this dim foredawn that was not so much night as a dead day.

* * * *

The day came, misty, veiled, and softly bright. It woke up the flocks of swallows in the great Square; it put touches of gold on the budding branches of the trees; it lit up the generous red brick houses with a rosy radiance not their own. It found the Doctor still looking out of the window, with his forehead resting against the frame. He was weary, for it aroused him from a sort of stupor; and in this stupor, as he half remembered, he had thought over, in inconsecutive, irregular moments of thought, the most of his life—had seen the Midge grow up by his side, through childhood, girlhood, to womanhood and to the time of parting. For, with a sudden comprehension of the nature of his love for her, there had come a quick, instinctive conviction that she never had loved him in that way; that she never could love him in that way. He did not know how he knew this; but it came to him as a fact, which he accepted as one accepts the fact that death has come into the house.

There were certain things left for him to do in this world. There was one thing most prominent at the moment—to go into his own room, and lie down, and sleep, or make some pretense of sleeping, until such time as morning should begin for other people. It was one of the things he had to do, and he did it. All his life long he had done the things he had to do, and this was one of the last things that could greatly vex him on this side of the grave.

* * * * *

Two hours later there was a ring at the door below that awoke him; a sound of feet on the stairs, and a knock at the door of his sitting-room. He heard Élise tell the visitor to wait for Miss Lodoiska, and heard her tramping heavily around to the side-door of the Midge's room.

He arose from the bed on which he was lying, and made himself presentable, and went into the sitting-room. Paul Hathaway was there, flushed and excited. He shook hands with him, and said a few commonplace words. Then he heard a step in the next room, and his heart leapt up to hear it. The door opened, and the Midge came out, and he saw her eyes meet Paul Hathaway's with that wonderful lightening of love which cannot be mistaken.

"I haven't slept well, Midge," he said: "I'm going out for a walk before breakfast."

He stopped as he went toward the door to take up his hat and coat that lay upon the sofa.

"Hathaway, my boy—" he began not quite knowing why or how he spoke. The Midge ran to kiss him a quick, impulsive good-bye, and then turned to Hathaway, and the Doctor went out to take his walk.

* * * * *

They were married in June, when Washington Square was all one flush of green. Hathaway gave up the voyage around the world. The Doctor made that the only condition, in giving his consent. And he himself so arranged matters that compliance with the condition was easy. It was a quiet wedding, in the old sitting-room. There were only two people present, beside the Doctor—Parker Prout and Professor Mannheim —and they brought their wedding gifts with them. Parker Prout had one of his own pictures—a picture on which he had worked very hard—and Mannheim brought a stack of precious music—he, and no one else, knew how precious it was to him.

And when it was over, and they had gone away, the two of them, to a certain little house up-town, which the Doctor had inspected long

ago, when he himself thought of moving from the rooms in Washington Place, he went up stairs and looked at the empty kitchen—he had sent Élise out to take a half day's holiday.

Then he went into the big pantry. In the corner, on the shelf, still lay the crock in which the Midge had hidden her head, heavy with childish grief, years before. The old stool stood before it. He sat down on it, and rested his hot forehead on the cool rim of the jar.

And that's the end of the story.

TWO CHARMING VOLUMES OF POETRY.

Airs from Arcady and Elsewhere

By H. C. BUNNER.

1 Vol., 12mo, Gilt Top, $1.25.

"It is not often that we have in our hands a volume of sweeter or more finished verses. . . . In choosing Love for a conductor, who alone may open the way to Arcady, the poet indicates the theme on which he sings best, and which reflects at some angle, or repeats in some strain the inspiration of the great poetic and dramatic passion of life. His poems are thrown together in a delicately concealed order, which is just perceptible enough to give an impression of progress and movement."—*The Independent.*

Ballades and Verses Vain.

By ANDREW LANG.

1 Vol., 12mo, Gilt Top, $1.50.

"The book is a little treasury of refined thought, graceful verse, world-philosophy, quiet humor, and sometimes a gentle cynicism. The versification is always polished, the sentiment delicate, and the diction vigorous and varied. It is a wholly charming production."—*Boston Saturday Evening Gazette.*

*** *For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, upon receipt of price, by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, Publishers,

743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

NEW EDITIONS IN UNIFORM BINDING.

SAXE HOLM'S STORIES.

FIRST SERIES.

"Draxy Miller's Dowry," "The Elder's Wife,"
"Whose Wife Was She?" "The One-Legged Dancers,"
"How One Woman Kept Her Husband,"
"Esther Wynn's Love Letters."

One vol., 12mo, cloth, $1.00. Paper, 50 Cents.

These stories are unique in recent literature for their intensity, their fascination, their thorough knowledge of the human heart, and the marvelous powers of description which they display. The gems of poetry scattered through their beautiful and subtle fabric constitute one of their most interesting and attractive characteristics, and warrant the verdict universally pronounced, as the stories have from time to time appeared in "Scribner's Monthly," that SAXE HOLM is one of the most versatile and accomplished of American writers of fiction.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

"Who 'Saxe Holm' is we do not know, but no one of the magazine contributors of the present day writes better stories than she. Her characters are strongly drawn, and she goes right to the heart of human experience as one who knows the way. . . . We heartily commend them as vigorous, wholesome, and sufficiently exciting stories."—*Advance.*

"The stories of Saxe Holm are among the very best of recent writing. They are simple narratives of homely occurrences, and win to the reading by a disregard of deeply laid sensations and startling denouncement."—*Utica Herald.*

"There are six of these stories. Not one of them can be called dull. Some of them are peculiarly entertaining, and all are written in a lively, animated style. They show both the originality and the art of successful narration along with considerable power in conceiving characters."—*Churchman.*

THE SECOND SERIES.

SAXE HOLM'S SERIES.

INCLUDING

"The Four-Leaved Clover," "My Tourmaline,"
"Farmer Bassett's Romance," "Joe Hales' Red Stockings,"
"Susan Lawton's Escape."

One vol., 12mo, cloth, $1.00. Paper, 50 Cents.

*** *The above books for sale by all booksellers, or will be sent, post or express charges paid, upon receipt of the price by the publishers,*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,
743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

"*Fresh and delightful.*"—NEW YORK EVENING POST.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

12mo, boards, gilt top, - - - - $1.00.

"He takes an inland voyage up the river of Memory, and sketches with his clear, crisp, vivid touch, a few of his adventures and experiences, . . and draws with charming simplicity."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"The collection will bear to be spoken of with enthusiasm, and will not only tend to keep alive the child feeling in the hearts of the elders, by having embodied it in speaking verse, but will give the children songs which will sing over in their hearts the purest and healthiest happiness of their young lives."—*The Independent.*

"A more exquisite and dainty art than Mr. Stevenson's has not come to the service of children and their interpretation."—*Springfield Republican.*

"Fresh and attractive. We commend them heartily."—*New York Sun.*

"These verses are simply exquisite. They are the child's thought in the child's language, and yet altogether poetical. We do not know anything in the whole range of English literature to equal them in their own peculiar charm. There is a subtle beauty in them which is indescribable and unequaled."—*The Churchman.*

"A model of books for the young of all ages."—*Philadelphia Record.*

*** *For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, on receipt of price, by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743 and 745 Broadway, New York.

UNIFORM LIBRARY EDITION.

MRS. FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT'S NOVELS.

THAT LASS O' LOWRIE'S.

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.25

"We know of no more powerful work from a woman's hand in the English language, not even excepting the best of George Eliot's."—*Boston Transcript.*

A FAIR BARBARIAN.

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.25

"A particularly sparkling story, the subject being the young heiress of a Pacific silver-mine, thrown amid the very proper petty aristocracy of an English rural town."—*Springfield Republican.*

THROUGH ONE ADMINISTRATION.

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.50

"The pathetic fervor which Mrs. Burnett showed so fully in 'That Lass o' Lowrie's' is exhibited in many a touching scene in her new story, which is only to be found fault with because it is too touching."—*London Athenæum.*

LOUISIANA.

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.25

"We commend this book as the product of a skillful, talented, well-trained pen. Mrs. Burnett's admirers are already numbered by the thousand, and every new work like this one can only add to their number."—*Chicago Tribune.*

HAWORTH'S

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.25

"It is but faint praise to speak of 'Haworth's' as merely a good novel. It is one of the few great novels."—*Hartford Courant.*

SURLY TIM,

AND OTHER STORIES.

One volume, 12mo, extra cloth, - - $1.25

"Each of these narratives have a distinct spirit, and can be profitably read by all classes of people. They are told not only with true art but with deep pathos."—*Boston Post.*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,
743 & 745 Broadway, New York.

GUERNDALE.

By J. S., of Dale.

One vol., 12mo, cloth, $1.25. Paper, 50 Cents.

Guerndale is a distinctly modern novel, and its claim to consideration lies in its revelation of modern tendencies. It is as far removed on the one hand from the current type of over-wrought psychological study, as on the other from the older conventional romance. Its original and striking quality does not depend on eccentricity, but on the fresh force in it and the directness of its dealings with the life of to-day.

"'Guerndale' will at once take rank as one of the cleverest and best written works of fiction of the year."—*Chicago Tribune.*

"It has thought, vigor and passion, and has not a drowsy page between the covers."—*N. Y. Home Journal.*

"Almost every page shows traces of thought and fancy, often even of grace."—*Boston Courier.*

"It shows greater power and gives greater promise than any American romance of the year by an unknown writer."—*N. Y. World.*

"After endless novels of culture, here is a novel of power; after a flood of social analysis and portraiture, here is a story of genuine passion and of very considerable insight of the deeper sort."—*Christian Union.*

"The plot of the story, or rather of the romance, for no other name properly describes it, is full of delicacy and beauty. . . The author has given us a story such as we have not had in this country since the time of Hawthorne."—*Boston Advertiser.*

*** *For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, upon receipt of price, by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,

743 AND 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

A BEAUTIFUL NEW EDITION.

By FRANK R. STOCKTON.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. FROST.

One vol., 12mo, - $2.00.

The new Rudder Grange has not been illustrated in a conventional way. Mr. Frost has given us a series of interpretations of Mr. Stockton's fancies, which will delight every appreciative reader,—sketches scattered through the text; larger pictures of

the many great and memorable events, and everywhere quaint ornaments. It is, on the whole, one of the best existing specimens of the complete supplementing of one another by author and artist. The book is luxurious in the best sense of the word, admirable in typography, convenient in size, and bound in a capital cover of Mr. Frost's design.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, by the publishers,

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743 & 745 Broadway, New-York.

WEIRD TALES.

BY E. T. W. HOFFMANN.

A New Translation from the German (with a Biographical Memoir) by J. T. BEALBY, B.A.

Two volumes, 12mo, with portrait, $3.00.

"The Weird Tales of E. T. W. Hoffmann have long held a unique place in German literature. Their translation into English and publication in an American edition will introduce to American readers one of the most fantastic and original geniuses of modern times; a man of more gifts than Poe, and with the same mastery of the weird and supernatural which gave Poe's works their unfailing fascination. Hoffmann knew how to construct a ghost story quite as skilfully as Poe, and with a good deal more sense of reality. All those who are in search of a genuine literary sensation, or who care for the marvellous and supernatural, will find these two volumes fascinating reading." — *Christian Union.*

THE DIAMOND LENS, AND OTHER STORIES.

BY FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

Collected and edited with a Sketch of the Author by WILLIAM WINTER.

One vol. 12mo, cloth, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

In the region of the fantastic and bizarre, O'Brien has, except Poe, no superior. This collection of tales selected by Mr. Winter contains the best and most striking of his stories.

*** *These books are for sale by all booksellers, or will be sent, post free, on receipt of price, by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743-745 Broadway, New York.

"Mr. Stockton has written a book which you can't discuss without laughing; and that is proof enough of its quality."

—N. Y. TRIBUNE.

THE LATE MRS. NULL.

By FRANK R. STOCKTON.

One Volume. 12mo. Cloth. $1.50.

"THE LATE MRS. NULL" is one of those fortunate books that goes beyond all expectation. Even those readers whose hopes have been raised the highest have before them—especially in the fact that they receive the story complete and at once, without intermediate serial publication—such an enjoyment as they hardly foresee.

It is enough to say of the scene that it is chiefly in Virginia, to show the possibilities of local character-drawing open to Mr. Stockton in addition to his other types; and to say that every character is full of the most ingenious and delicious originality is altogether needless. In an increasing scale, the situations are still more complicated, ingenious, and enjoyable than the characters; and finally, the plot is absolutely baffling in its clever intricacy yet apparent simplicity—a true device of Mr. Stockton's tireless fancy.

"We congratulate the novel reader upon the feast there is in 'The Late Mrs. Null.'"—*Hartford Post.*

"We can assure prospective readers that their only regret after finishing the book will be that never again can they hope for the pleasure of reading it again for the first time."—*The Critic.*

"Original, bright, and full of the author's delicate humor."—*New York Journal of Commerce.*

"'The Late Mrs. Null' is delicious."—*Boston Journal.*

For sale by all booksellers, or sent, post-paid, by the publishers,

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

743 & 745 Broadway, New-York.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below

FEB 5 - 1948

REC'D LD-URL
LD-URL JAN 6 1966
JUN 19 1967
REC'D LD-URL
OCT 6 1967
SEP 26 1967
REC'D LD-URL
LD URL MAR 13 1968

FEB 29 1968
DISCHARGE-URL
JUN 13 1981
JUN 27 1981

Form L-9
20m-12,'39(3386)

AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 001 372 647 6
3 1158 00697 2334